

Halifax metro



RIZ AHMED
I find my lack
of Star Wars
fandom...
disturbing
metroLIFE

Your essential daily news | WEEKEND, DECEMBER 16-18, 2016

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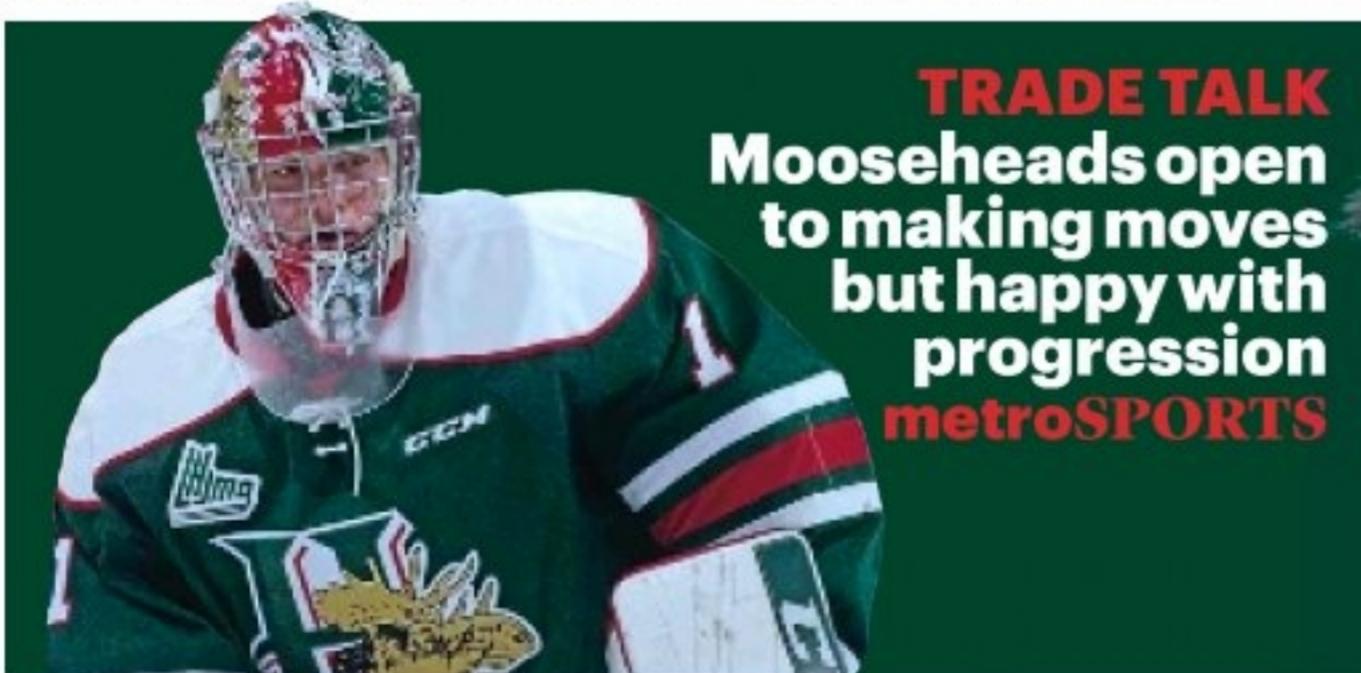


Service dog Bally calms her owner Laura Bruce during a press conference at Province House on Thursday. JEFF HARPER/METRO

POWER held in a PAW

Veterans ask federal officials to recognize service dogs for post-traumatic stress disorder

metroNEWS

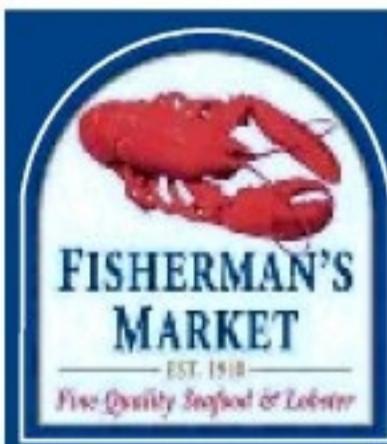


TRADE TALK
Mooseheads open to making moves but happy with progression
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Your essential daily news

Canada has banned asbestos; read Metro's explainer on what that means for you. [Canada](#)

DANGER
ASBESTOS

5

THINGS TO DO IN HALIFAX THIS WEEKEND

From the sacred to Santa, Christmas is coming.

YVETTE D'ENTREMONT METRO



1 Halifax Lights Holiday Market

This is the last weekend to take in the second annual Historic Properties market on the Halifax waterfront, Privateer's Wharf. Enjoy local artisans, music, holiday lights and more. The market is open Friday from 4 to 9 p.m., Saturday from noon to 9 p.m. and on Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

2 Yuletide Art Bazaar

Give the gift of art. With a tagline like "Affordable! Transportable! Occasionally deplorable!" you can't go wrong. Check out Plan B on Gottingen Street until Dec. 20 where a collection of 10 local artists have a display of art media set up for sale. Prices range from low to medium so you can give a gift or stuff a stocking. All items are cash only. Check out facebook.com/PlanBHalifax for more.



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3 A Christmas Carol

Ebenezer Scrooge brings his best 'Bah, humbug' to the Neptune Theatre's studio stage. The popular Dickens tale about the penny-pinching miser whose world view changes following visits from the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future is adapted and directed by Jeremy Webb. The Eastern Front Theatre production opened Thursday and runs through to Dec. 24 with several matinee and evening shows. Get tickets at neptunetheatre.com under 'Visiting Shows.'



4 Miracle on 34th Street

It's the staged version of the classic holiday film. Kris Kringle fills everyone with Christmas spirit at Macy's department store. With the exception of his boss, Doris Walker. Kringle's eventual trial leads everyone to reflect on the age-old question: Do YOU believe in Santa Claus? The show runs until Dec. 30 at Neptune Theatre's Fountain Hall stage. Visit neptunetheatre.com for tickets, dates and showtimes.

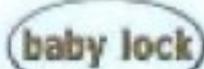


5 A King's Christmas

Get into the Christmas spirit with this ninth annual "feast of seasonal song and story." Directed by five-time Grammy winner Paul Halley, this spirited event features the University of King's College Chapel Choir performing a blend of carols ranging from medieval to modern. Dr. Roberta Barker is guest narrator. The Halifax performances happen Sunday at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at All Saints Cathedral. Reserve tickets at ticketshalifax.com.

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BUDGET

Province surplus tightens to \$12.1M

Nova Scotia's finance minister says the provincial surplus is shrinking, and there simply isn't room to sweeten salary offers to the province's unhappy teachers and civil servants.

Randy Delorey released his year-end fiscal update Thursday, with a revised surplus of \$12.1 million — \$5 million less than the razor thin surplus estimated in last April's budget. He singled out the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU), which in a vote Wednesday rejected a tentative contract agreement for 7,000 civil servants that was reached over a year ago.

Delorey said the deal, which saw the government move from an initial wage offer of two per cent over five years to three per cent over four, was "fair and affordable." He said the government intended to stick to its plan to keep the books balanced.

"We have been clear that we will stick to our plan," he said. "It is not fair to ask our children and grandchildren to pay for unsustainable compensation packages provided for services delivered today."

Finance officials said the projected surplus was based in part on contract agreements that both unions had already rejected. They said the surplus could be at risk depending on what is worked out at the table.

NDP Leader Gary Burrill said it's apparent the government is willing to pay any price to avoid a deficit, something he said was "folly on their part."

Burrill said Nova Scotia is

OVERALL

In terms of the overall fiscal situation, the province said the slight reduction in the 2016-17 surplus was due to a \$72.9-million decrease in revenues because of a delay in the completion of the new Halifax

Convention Centre and lower tax revenues. The shifting of the convention centre from this year's budget to next year's reduced revenue by \$110.3 million.

going against the grain of current economic thinking on running deficits.

"I think the best economic thinking including the International Monetary Fund and all kinds of leading thinkers around the Western world is that this is not the way to go in the present moment," he said.

Delorey said the government has been consistent all along in its message to

the unions — teachers are currently in class under work-to-rule in their own dispute with the province — that any movement on salaries would have

to be balanced with savings found in other areas of their contracts. "We don't have a lot of room to move in this round of negotiations, that's just the reality that Nova Scotia faces," he said.

NSGEU president Jason MacLean said the union is looking for wage increases that are tied to the province's fiscal growth. THE CANADIAN PRESS



We have to be clear that we will stick to our plan.

Randy Delorey



The Saint Mary's Huskies football team will now play in five-team league that will include a Quebec-based school. JEFF HARPER/METRO

Hey Huskies, here come the Gaiters

SPORT

Bishop's U will be fifth team in AUS football conference

Adam Richardson
For Metro

The Atlantic University Sport football conference is expanding to five teams.

The Bishop's University Gaiters will join the four current AUS squads on the gridiron beginning next fall for the 2017 season. Based in Lennoxville, Que., the Gaiters are no stranger to Atlantic opponents, regularly competing

in interlock contests in recent seasons. The Gaiters edged the Saint Mary's Huskies 30-29 at home for their only victory of 2016. Dating back to 2006, the Gaiters have won seven of their last 10 games against the AUS.

Bishop's struggled in conference play in recent years against many other powerhouse Quebec schools, prompting the move east to compete against universities of similar size and resources. They have gone 1-20 against Quebec opponents since their last winning season in 2013.

The move comes after Bishop's, Mount Allison, St. Francis Xavier and Acadia recently re-branded their institutional alliance the "Maple League", representing a collaboration of "small-by-design" academic

2,400

Bishop's University has a modest enrollment of approximately 2,400 students.

welcomed by the AUS schools."

The AUS will maintain its eight-game regular season schedule, but two bye weeks will be inserted into the calendar. Phil Currie, executive director for Atlantic University Sport, said details such as a new playoff format are still to be determined, but all four AUS schools were on board with the addition.

"For 18 years, we've been looking at expanding AUS football, but I always felt that expansion would occur through one of our internal members here in the region," Currie explained.

"When the opportunity to add an external school we were already familiar with and fit well with our philosophy, we were ecstatic. Our members are all very excited about this."

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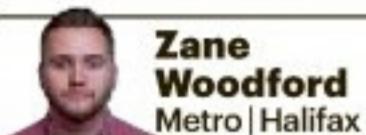
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Veterans fight for service dogs

DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

Animals help with emotional trauma as well as physical



**Zane
Woodford**
Metro | Halifax

A group of Nova Scotia veterans and politicians from two parties is calling on the federal government to level the playing field for people with service dogs for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Former NDP MP Peter Stoffer, veterans Medric Cousineau and Stu Rodgers, PC leader Jamie Baillie and NDP MLA Dave Wilson held a press conference at Province House on Thursday to call for changes to the Disability Tax Credit.

As is, the credit allows people who are severely visually or hearing impaired, or have severe autism or severe epilepsy to qualify for a tax credit for expenses related to a service dog.

People with PTSD do not qualify for that tax credit.

The federal government has said that it's waiting to change that until it gets the results of a study on the efficacy of service dogs for people with PTSD.

"The reality is, we already know that service dogs for post-traumatic stressed veterans and civilians save lives," Stoffer said. "We already know that. You



Medric Cousineau's service dog, Thai, keeps an eye on the crowd during a press conference at Province House in the shadow of Cousineau on Thursday. JEFF HARPER/METRO

don't need a study that says that."

Stoffer suggested the study was a delay tactic, and the government could make the necessary changes anytime it pleases. He said waiting till the study is

done — likely a year from now — would delay the change to the tax credit till December 2018.

"You do not have to wait that long," he said. "I'd like to remind

my federal Liberal counterparts in government of Canada, you have a majority government. There's absolutely nothing — legally, politically, socially,

morally — nothing stopping them by the end of this day from making this happen."

Cousineau, a retired Air Force captain diagnosed with PTSD was paired with his service dog, Thai, in 2012. He's become an advocate for veterans using service dogs to cope with PTSD through his organization, Paws Fur Thought.

"What we're asking for, the no less, the no more, is something that should be an absolute no-brainer, because we as Canadians will not stand for discrimination," he said.

"I know if it was up to the Canadian public, they would fix this, and they would fix this because it is the right, Canadian thing to do."

What is so special about service dogs is that they have a power that people don't ... They see the wounds that our veterans bring home from their service overseas that we sometimes unfortunately and wrongly are blind to.

Jamie Baillie



Medric Cousineau is a Canadian Armed Forces veteran and founder of Paws Fur Thought. JEFF HARPER/METRO

We're not asking for anything over and above what other service dog handlers get. Just update the antiquated tax code.

Stu Rodgers

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Homeless shelter beds in high demand due to cold

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Winter season dangerous for those without secure housing



Bone-chilling cold and blowing snow are driving up business at the city's homeless shelters.

Out of the Cold emergency winter shelter, which is run out of St. Matthew's United Church on Barrington Street, is a last resort for people who can't find a warm bed elsewhere.

Lesley Mulcahy, volunteer and organizer with Out of the Cold, said they're seeing slightly higher numbers than they would

HOW TO HELP

The shelter is looking for donations of warm winter clothing, long underwear, socks, hand warmers and toiletries. "Bus tickets are incredibly helpful to us ... for our guests if they have appointments or access another shelter," Mulcahy said. They're also looking for food and meal donations as well as volunteers, particularly people who could take night shifts.



Lesley Mulcahy, a volunteer organizer with the Out of the Cold shelter, gets an early start getting cots ready in the basement of Saint Matthew's United Church on Thursday. JEFF HARPER/METRO

normally have this early in the season. Wednesday night they were full.

"We've been fairly busy since we opened Dec. 1, and most shelters in the city have been at capacity or pretty close to capacity," Mulcahy said.

"In the past couple of days the temperatures have dropped and the conditions have changed, so we tend to see an increase in



This time of year, it can be really quite dangerous for people who aren't securely housed.

Lesley Mulcahy

people who come to the shelter to potentially stay with us for a bed or will drop in to get warm, get a meal, or access the donations."

They have 15 beds available

December to April. They see between 20-50 people a night who drop in for support, meals and advice on finding housing support and health care.

"When we get into snow-

storms and rainstorms this time of year, it can be really quite dangerous for people who aren't securely housed or who are experiencing homelessness. That's why we try to fill the gap," Mulcahy said. "For individuals in those situations, it can be dangerous for them any time of the year but from an exposure perspective, things change when we get into our winter season."

TRAVEL Enfield tops for comfort



Haley Ryan

Metro Halifax

The experts at Expedia have highlighted one of the more ... overlooked parts of the HRM, and included Enfield in a recent list of "55 Coziest Cities in Canada."

According to the popular booking site's travel blog, the list was based on expedia.ca hotel user reviews from 2015 data. They analyzed each entry and found the top Canadian cities with "the highest comfort ratings."

"These reviews referenced everything from pillows to fireplaces and anything in between," the blog post said, and all of the entries on the list were rated 4 and higher out of 5.

At No. 5, Enfield was the highest Nova Scotia entry on the list, followed by Halifax (No. 16) and Sydney, Cape Breton (No. 42).

Although there was no mention of the popular Enfield Big Stop in the post, Expedia cited fresh air, good food, and "a quiet place away from the bustle," as reasons to check out Enfield.

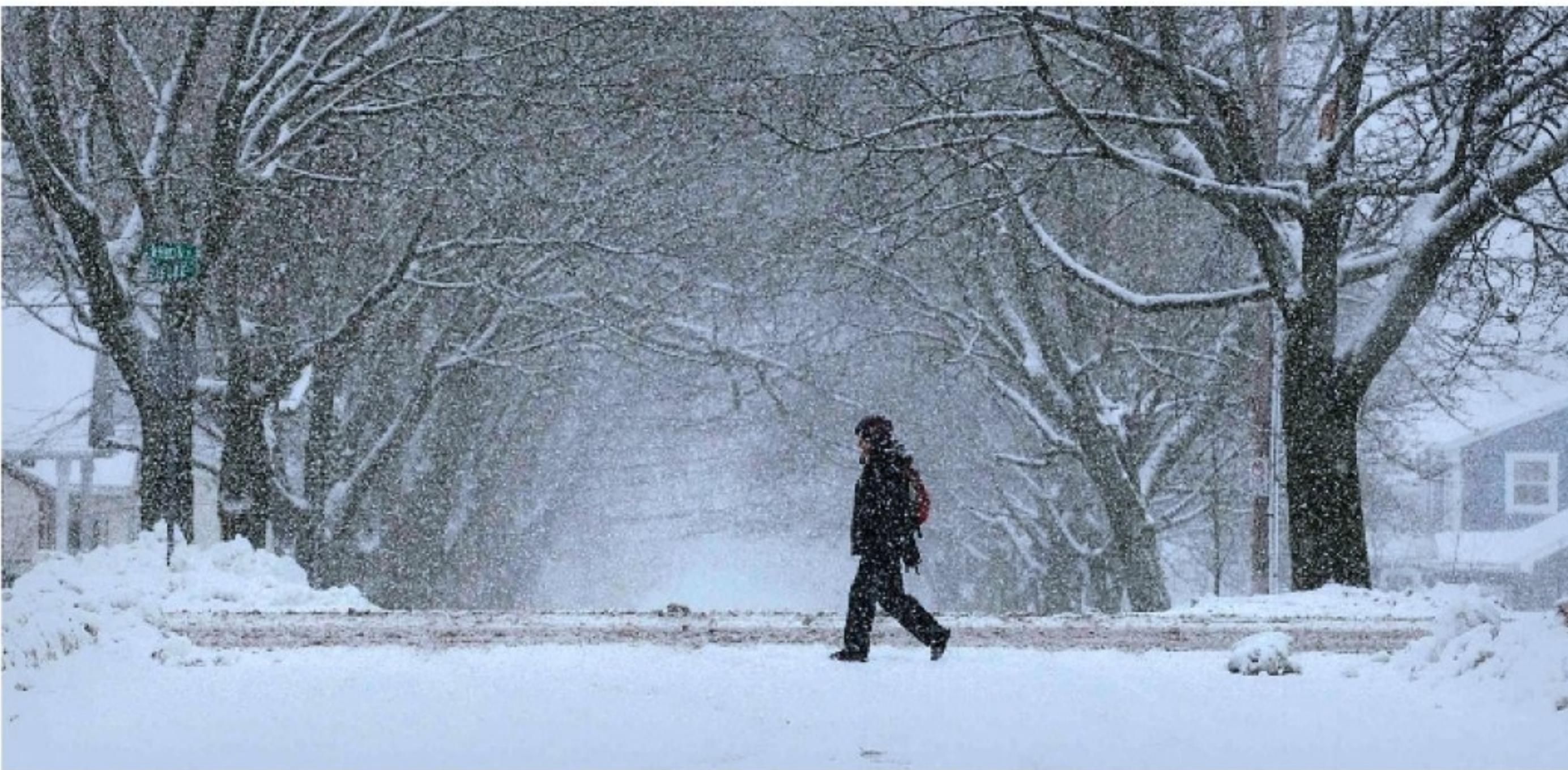
A picture of the admittedly lovely Uniacke Estate Museum Park accompanied the Enfield ranking, where visitors can "admire the 19th century country house of Attorney General Richard John Uniacke."

Of course, the estate is in Mount Uniacke, not Enfield, but it's likely Expedia isn't interested in the semantics of Nova Scotia communities.

May your days be merry and bright, and may all your blue bag recycling be placed in a separate bag from your paper recycling.

Don't let the holidays be wasteful.
Use the Halifax Recycles app or
visit halifax.ca/whatgoeswhere to sort smart this holiday season.

HALIFAX



A pedestrian walks along Oxford Street during snowfall on Thursday. Halifax Regional School Board closed schools for all students. JEFF HARPER/METRO

'Balancing act' to call snow day

WEATHER

Safety first, board says, even if parents don't agree

School boards in Nova Scotia say much goes into deciding if students should stay home due to nasty weather — and say they don't track complaints from disgruntled parents who think they made the wrong call.

"It's a balancing act, but

obviously safety is our primary consideration," Deanna Gillis, spokeswoman for the Strait Regional School Board, said Thursday. "We want kids in class as much as possible, but we will always err on the side of safety in making our decision."

The provincial government increased the school year from 190 days to 195 days more than four decades ago, to anticipate an average of five storm days per school year.

The Halifax Regional School Board has only surpassed that number twice in the past 20

years: Schools across the board were shut five-and-a-half days in the 2014-15 school year, and six days in 2007-08.

Elsewhere in the province — especially in rural areas where students can live dozens of kilometres from school — cancellations appear to be more frequent.

Gillis said the Strait board, which has more than 6,000 students in 20 schools, only closed schools four times last year, but they were closed nine days in 2014-15 and 11.5 days in 2013-14.

Between the 1996-97 school year and 2007-08, Annapolis Val-

ley Regional School Board schools were closed an average of 8.3 days, while schools in the Tri-County Regional School Board were shuttered an average of 7.3 days.

All of the Halifax school board's 136 schools were shut Thursday due to "impending weather," confounding some parents who looked out their windows to find clear roads and sidewalks.

"It's not cold. It's not snowing. I see blue sky. Streets are clear. Why is school cancelled?" tweeted a person under the handle

@JoeyArchibald.

But by early Thursday afternoon, large snowflakes were blanketing the ground and temperatures were dropping, causing messy driving conditions. Halifax Regional Police reported a number of weather-related accidents.

Halifax's board gathers information from a variety of sources beginning at 4:30 a.m. Those include forecasts from a weather consulting service, transportation staff, bus companies, other local weather services and a local meteorologist, said board spokesman Doug Hadley.

"Based on these multiple sources of information that we gather, our staff then makes a recommendation to our superintendent as to what the outcome should be," said Hadley.

The decision is ideally made before 6:30 a.m., and ultimately decided by the superintendent.

Several school boards said they often receive complaints from parents, but they do not track those concerns.

The provincial Education Department said Thursday it leaves snow-day considerations to the boards. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Breathing some dragon fire into your holidays

CULTURE

Exhibit opens this weekend at Museum of Natural History

 **Jen Taplin**
For Metro Halifax

With one fiery breath they can level small villages. And starting this weekend they'll be in Halifax.

Here Be Dragons takes over the Museum of Natural History starting Saturday and runs until April 9.

"It's broken into three sections: it looks at medieval, cultural and also dinosaurs to explain the dragon stories," said Jeff Gray, museum spokesman.

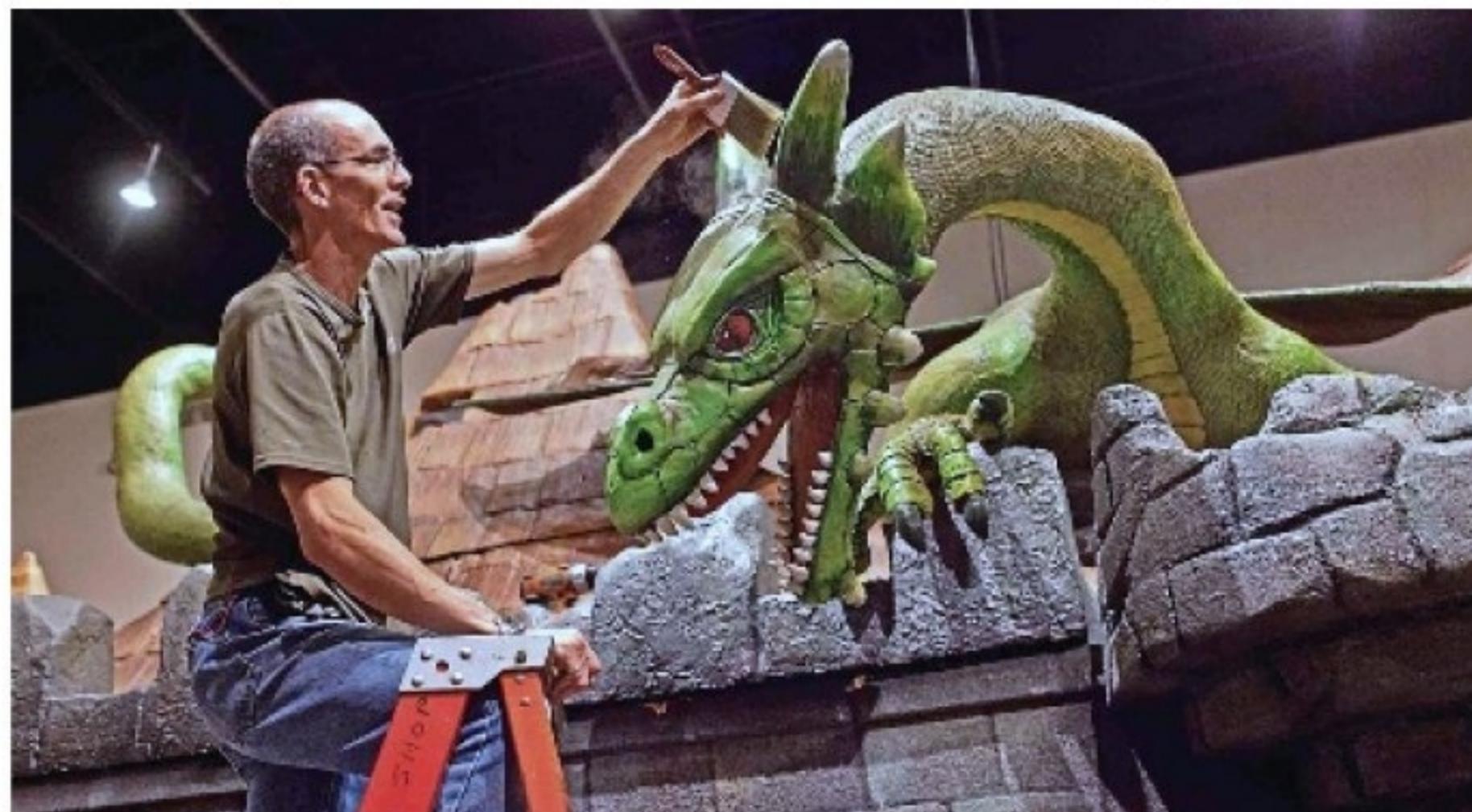
"And then it's fleshed out with live animals: a variety of monitor lizards and bearded dragons."

Animals appear throughout the exhibit along with specimens, artifacts, models and an examination of dragons in popular culture.

It's the first showing of this exhibit in Canada.

It was created by Build 4 Impact, a company based in Kentucky.

"It has traveled around the U.S. to a number of museums



Troy Cole dusts off one of the display dragons at the Museum of Natural History during an installation Thursday. JEFF HARPER/METRO

and zoos because of the live animal component," he said.

With its connection to the natural world, the exhibit is a perfect fit for the museum.

Gray said they feature their biggest exhibits during the winter months and they were scouting for something a little different than the

20

The number of animals in the Here Be Dragons exhibit.

usual dinosaurs.

"There's a lot of pop culture interest in dragons right now so we thought it was fit and they were really excited to bring it to us," Gray said.

The exhibit will also feature dragons in film, like Harry Potter, and TV, like Game of Thrones.

"Dragons have this allure for people; people are fascinated by dragons," he said.

The museum has been teasing the new exhibit for weeks now and Gray said there is plenty of excitement building.

"A lot of people will say 'oh my children will be so excited' and others will say 'I'm so excited,' so it's nice to see a universality of interest."

+ EARLY LAUNCH

An exhibit starting before the holidays is a bit of an experiment for the Museum of Natural History. Gray said they decided to launch Here Be Dragons early to give options for parents to keep the kids entertained in that slow week between Christmas and New Years.

PIER 21

Seasonal customs displayed

How do Canadians with different traditions celebrate the holiday season?

With dancing, rigatoni and wiener roasts, according to a display at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.

In some households, pyjamas play a major role in the festivities.

The Halifax museum is inviting visitors to provide details about their holiday customs, and displaying their notes in its Hall of Tribute.

The entries run the gamut from dining to dancing and cover Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali and the Lunar New Year, said Ann-Marie Begin, a heritage interpreter at the museum.

"One family says that on New Year's Day they've had a wiener roast in the provincial park at Goldstream (near Victoria, on Vancouver Island) every year for 35 years, rain or snow," Begin said.

Several people have mentioned wearing pyjamas while unwrapping gifts, or receiving pyjamas as a gift, "and that being the one gift they're allowed to open on Christmas Eve."

Besides adding to the display, some visitors appear to be picking up ideas to adopt in their own homes. A case in point is one family's Christmas tradition that involves everyone wearing matching onesies on which their names are embroidered.

"And I actually had someone come up to me and say, 'Do you know where I can get matching onesies for my whole family that I can get embroidered?'" Begin recalled. THE CANADIAN PRESS

THINK BEFORE YOU PARK

When and where you park during the winter can have a big impact on clearing.

The municipality is stepping up winter parking enforcement in areas around hospitals and schools, bus routes and problem streets for emergency vehicles and clearing equipment. Plan ahead. Walk, carpool, take the bus or make arrangements for off-street parking when the overnight parking ban is in effect or there is bad weather in the forecast.

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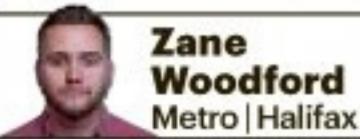
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TRANSPARENCY

Municipal campaign donations disclosed



**Zane
Woodford**
Metro | Halifax

Halifax Mayor Mike Savage raised less than half as much money for this fall's municipal election as he did in 2012.

Campaign contribution disclosures released on Thursday show Savage raised \$122,282 in cash and in-kind donations. In 2012, he raised \$354,470.99.

Savage faced only one opponent this go around — entrepreneur Lil MacPherson, who raised \$11,855.74 in cash donations. In 2012, he faced five opponents.

When it comes to councillors, Coun. Wayne Mason was able to bring in the most money, raising \$20,524 in cash and in-kind donations — all from individuals.

Coun. Sam Austin raised the second most money, with \$18,500 in cash and in-kind donations, and Coun. Lindell Smith raised the third most, with \$15,450 in cash donations.

Former councillor Linda Mosher raised the most money of any councillor in 2012, bringing in \$19,900.

Councillors Austin, Mason, Smith, Shawn Cleary, Richard Zurawski, and Lisa Blackburn took no donations from development nor construction companies. Neither did the four acclaimed councillors, only one of whom, Steve Craig, raised any money at all.

All other councillors, and the mayor, accepted campaign donations from development or construction companies.

To see the exact funds your councillor raised, go to [metronews.ca](#).



Mayor Mike Savage raised less money this election.

JEFF HARPER/METRO



Firefighters attend a working fire in this file photo. A new crop of volunteer firefighters will be graduating soon. CONTRIBUTED/FILE

Volunteer all fired up

PUBLIC SERVICE

Firefighting program sees boost in recruit numbers



**Yvette
d'Entremont**
Metro | Halifax

Lindsay Lamrock loves being a volunteer firefighter.

For the past year, Lamrock has served at Station 56 Black Point. She was one of 57 new volunteer firefighters who came onboard in 2015 and she actively encourages anyone interested to give it a try.

"I knew that there was a need in the Black Point area, my community. I tried it, I fell in love with it, and I'm so happy that I became a volunteer," she said in an interview.

"I still find it challenging being a female because it's so male dominated, but I stay on top of my game and I stay educated."

The past three years have seen a steady stream of new volunteer firefighters in HRM.

The latest group of 24 recruits were to graduate Thursday but weather dampened those plans. Instead, the newest recruits will graduate in the new year.

"We're one of the most complex fire services in the country because we have some stations that are 24/7 career and some

that are shared between career and volunteer and some that are fully volunteer stations," said Beth VanGorder, HRM's volunteer firefighter program manager.

"It is a struggle in the areas where we don't have people... Young people are moving into the city, the population is aging in general, and this is a specific skill that requires a level of fitness to do, and so in places like anything east of Musquodoboit Harbour, Tangier, Mushaboom, Sheet Harbour, it's more difficult to find people."

Despite that difficulty, VanGorder said they're "doing a steady business bringing people in."

She said the municipality is losing fewer volunteers than

24

Total firefighting recruits graduating in the new year. "That's a service that we wouldn't have if people weren't stepping up in their communities to become volunteer firefighters," says Beth VanGorder.

it's gaining. In 2014, 60 people graduated as volunteer firefighters. In 2015, there were 57; and in 2016, there were 58.

"There's approximately \$10 million worth of in-service that volunteers give us calculated at current union rates," she said.

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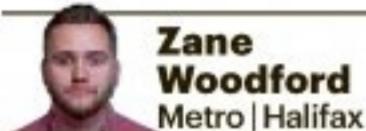
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Cycling group 'shocked' by Dalhousie University decision

TRANSPORTATION

Protected bike lane loses some protection



**Zane
Woodford**
Metro | Halifax

A local cycling group said it's shocked after an announcement Thursday that a protected bike lane on Dalhousie University campus would no longer be completely protected.

In a "neighbourhood notice" from the university sent by email Thursday morning, the university announced it had removed the bollards — plastic posts that separate bicycle traffic from vehicular traffic — in front of the Dalhousie Arts Centre, the building that houses the Rebecca Cohn Theatre, "to alleviate traffic



A cyclist rides down the bike lane on University Avenue this fall. ZANE WOODFORD/METRO

congestion associated with large frequent events."

"It took a long time to get the bicycle lane in on University

Avenue ... and it is a pilot project so that leaves a little bit of room for tweaking it, but removing the barriers from the bicycle lane is

not a tweak," said Halifax Cycling Coalition executive director Kelsey Lane.

The bike lane was installed

in September on University Avenue between LeMarchant and Robie streets, nearly two years after it was originally conceived

of. The lane is a two-year pilot project designed to figure out what works and what doesn't.

And according to feedback that the university has received, bollards in front of the Arts Centre don't work.

Rochelle Owen, the director of Dalhousie's office of sustainability, said they'd received about 150 comments on the bike lane, most of them related to the Arts Centre. She said the change only affects one eighth of the bike lane.

"The idea behind making that modification is to still have a lane for cyclists, so that's not taken away, but just to create less confusion about loading and unloading during peak times," she said.

Lane said the modification will deter people from cycling to the university.

"It's not 100 per cent acceptable to see them revert to the status quo of concentrating on cars instead of looking forward to the future of sustainable transportation in Halifax," she said.

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ANIMALS

Injured kitten rescued from snowbank

A Nova Scotia animal hospital received a little Holly this week.

Veterinarian Dr. Kathryn Finlayson of East River Animal Hospital said a man brought in a six-week-old female kitten on Tuesday afternoon, after he noticed something moving around in a snowbank while driving in Pictou Landing.

She said he told her he stopped his car to check on

it, thinking it was an injured animal, and found the kitten.

"When we examined it, it had road rash on its face, and on its feet and an obvious broken leg," Finlayson said, leading them to admit the feline, clean its wounds, and X-ray it to confirm the fracture.

Staff members have named it Holly.

"It looks like somebody probably threw it out a

vehicle from what we can tell."

The veterinary care centre in New Glasgow has a fund of donated money that helps in situations like this, allowing them to test the kitten for

FIV (feline immunodeficiency virus) and leukemia.

As both tests were negative, they're now searching for a new home for the kitten.

TC MEDIA

It looks like someone probably threw it out of a vehicle from what we can tell.

Dr. Kathryn Finlayson



In a frame grab from a video from the **Central Nova Scotia Correctional facility in Halifax** inmate Dwayne Wright is kicked by inmate Charles Wallace. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HANDOUT

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Time to act on prisons

CORRECTIONS SERVICES

Ombudsman concerned by violence in penitentiaries

Canada's outgoing prisoners ombudsman says "it's time" for the federal government to move on promised reforms he hopes will dampen a rising wave of violence in the nation's penitentiaries.

Howard Sapers, the correctional investigator of Canada, said in an interview that when he surveys key indicators after almost 13 years in his office, he sees a harsher prison environment that is harming inmates, staff and public safety.

"It's a hardening of the institutional environment and retreat from some of the fundamental principles of good corrections," said the criminologist, who completes his term on Dec. 31.

Sapers' office has documented a 93 per cent increase in inmate assaults since 2006 in federal jails, and a Canadian Press survey found beatings are also rising sharply in provincial facilities in Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Alberta.

Sapers said he sees hope for reforms in the prime minister's mandate letter to Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, which calls for a review of the criminal justice system and sentencing changes over the last decade to ensure they are "increasing the safety of our communities."

Her mandate letter also calls for more restorative justice and

other initiatives to reduce the escalating number of indigenous prisoners. The letter also mandates the justice department to improve "gaps in services" to inmates with mental health issues.

However, Sapers says he's becoming concerned about the pace of change on these areas.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator says that during the decade of the Conservatives' so-called "law-and-order" legislative changes, the net prison population grew by about 10 per cent, or about 1,377 people.

According to the Office of the Correctional Investigator, day parole fell by 14 per cent and full parole dropped by 27 per cent over the decade, while there was a slight increase of two per cent in the number of prisoners forced to serve out their full terms.

Data presented in a recent journal article, which uses Correctional Service of Canada figures, also shows that staff use of force climbed from about 1,000 incidents annually in 2006 to about 1,500 last year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

+ VIOLENCE

■ Suicide rate up

Non-accidental deaths in custody, suicides and attempted suicides all climbed. The use of pepper spray to subdue prisoners more than doubled in the same time period.



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Family lost in house fire

ONTARIO

First Nation community struggling with tragedy

A father, three young children and a baby are believed to have died in a fire that destroyed their home and ripped apart this First Nation community amid efforts Thursday to recover and identify the charred remains of the victims.

Shocked community leaders and residents struggled to come to terms with the devastating loss that occurred about 12 hours after a blaze in Port Colborne, Ont., also claimed the lives of four family members.

"We've only started to understand what has happened," Randall Phillips, chief of the Oneida Nation of the Thames, said Thursday. "Our community is suffering. There's not a person in this community that doesn't know one of the victims or the victims' family."

Relatives of the dead were



Fire officials attend the scene of a house fire on Oneida Nation of the Thames reserve on Thursday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

in shock, and heart-broken, Phillips said, adding that a forensic anthropologist had only managed to identify the remains of the adult and one of the children.

A man who said he was a brother of the deceased father shooed photographers from

the blackened frame of the house on the edge of the town as firefighters and investigators worked in the wreckage of the home.

Firefighters arriving on the scene in frigid temperatures at about 11 a.m. Wednesday could do little more than douse the

flames, which took about two hours. The cause remained under investigation.

Phillips, who said the two-storey home was old and "just basically kindling," lashed out at the federal government for rejecting the community's plea for funding to upgrade 50 of

its houses, saying First Nations housing is in crisis.

"That might have been one of the houses that was on that list but we were denied that funding," Phillips said, his voice rising in anger. "This is a perfect example in terms of us not being able to refurbish or fix houses that are in need of this kind of repair."

The government explained the denial on the basis that housing money was more needed in the North and "not a single dollar" came down south, the chief said.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said she was "deeply saddened" by the loss of life in the community.

"Our hearts go out to the community during this difficult time," she said. "I have reached out to the Chief to offer our support. We remain steadfast in our commitment to work with First Nations to ensure the safety of their communities."

The Oneida Nation of the Thames has about 6,000 registered members, with 3,700 living in the community 25 kilometres southwest of London, Ont.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

METRO EXPLAINS What the asbestos ban means

 **May Warren**
Metro | Toronto

On Thursday the federal government announced a plan to ban manufacturing any products containing asbestos, and its import or export by 2018.

Metro breaks down the news and what it means for you.

What is it? Asbestos refers to a group of minerals that, at its peak, was found in more than 3,000 applications.

Why is it dangerous? The World Health Organization declared asbestos a "human carcinogen" way back in 1987. Even small amounts of airborne asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer.

So there's a ban, yay us? Canada is late to the game on the issue. The government's move comes after decades of lobbying from labour groups, and people who have died or lost loved ones.

What else? The government pledges to create new health and safety regulations to limit contact workers have with existing asbestos on the job.



Ayla Reznick with her dog Luna.

EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

Lucky Luna survives after being hit by a train



Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Luna the dog is dog-gone lucky.

The precocious pup, an Australian shepherd-border collie mix, was hit by a GO train Dec. 7 in Toronto, Ont. Despite being pulled under the vehicle, she

survived unscathed.

"It's a miracle," Luna's owner, Ayla Reznick, said. "I can't even imagine my life without Luna right now."

Luna slipped her leash while out for a walk in Parkdale. The dog walker tried to pursue her, Reznick said, but the pooch bolted.

Aided by members of the Lost and Found Pets of Ontario Facebook group, Reznick scoured the neighbourhood but didn't find Luna.

Luna eventually returned home on her own, and aside from a few mysterious scrapes and bruises, she was no worse for wear. She was given a clean

bill of health from the vet the following day, Reznick said.

It wasn't until later that Reznick learned Luna's brief adventure nearly cost the dog her life.

A GO train operator named Jonathan Podzhyun reached out to her on Facebook, saying he was on board when the train hit a dog matching Luna's de-

scription. He was certain the dog had died.

"He was shocked and amazed that she was all right," Reznick said.

According to Reznick, Podzhyun told her the newer GO trains are a bit higher than older models, which could explain how Luna escaped harm.

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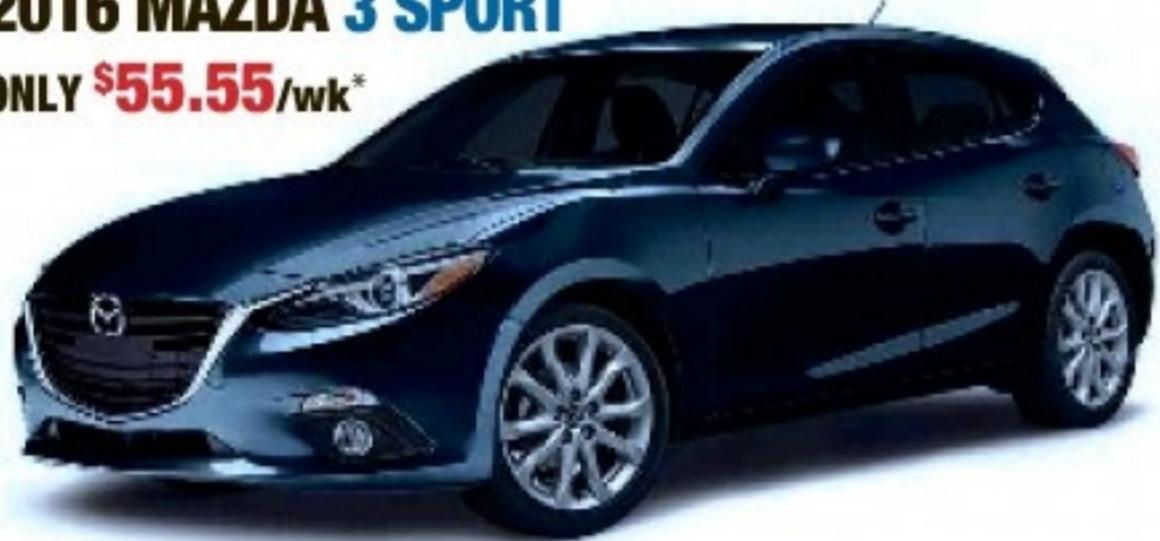
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We ignore dual realities at our peril

Rosemary Westwood relocates from Canada to the U.S. She chronicles her observations in a weekly column for Metro.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
From the U.S.

For a minute there, it appeared as if the only star president-elect Donald Trump could scrounge up to sing at his inauguration was the runner-up in 2010's America's Got Talent, Jackie Evancho.

Not exactly in keeping with the Trump Hotel motto "Never Settle."

And it felt so right. Who could possibly want to serenade into power the most dangerous president elected in my lifetime? Who could want to sing those myth-making lyrics "land of the free" to a man in favour of voter suppression and media suppression, deporting an entire religion and jailing innocents, a man who takes his leadership cues from Vladimir Putin, who lies to his supporters in order to cement his own power?

The answer, it turns out, is Andrea Bocelli. I'll never hear



Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli performs in Budapest, Hungary on Nov. 5. Bocelli has been confirmed as a performer at president-elect Donald Trump's inauguration. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

that duet with Celine Dion the same way again.

It's still a bit gratifying to know that most of Hollywood, whose opinions I care little about otherwise, is MIA on this one.

Of course, Donald Trump's own celebrity has never really translated into widespread

celebrity political love. (Aside from Kanye West's less-than-gushing support, Alec, the lesser of the Baldwins, and the actress from Clueless who wasn't Cher or Tai.)

But the lack of Hollywood support certainly didn't bother Trump's base, who seem to view celebrities (minus Trump

himself) as de facto "elites" (a term now devoid of meaning, since it also appears to apply to every New Yorker, including nearly half of the city that's living in or near poverty).

Indeed, some might not care who sings about "the rockets' red glare" this time. What looks bad from where

I'm sitting, clearly, looks completely different to someone who voted for Trump.

That acceptance — not really of a post-fact world, but perhaps a duel-reality world — comes with a few requirements.

The first is to remember that while I'm rolling my

eyes at reports in the Daily Beast that Trump wanted Aretha Franklin to sing for him (Aretha?!), some of Trump's 46 per cent of the U.S. electorate are reading on Breitbart that President Obama's investigation into Russian hacking is just sour grapes after the Democrats lost the election.

There are two American realities, and we ignore the one we're not living in at our own peril.

Which brings us to the other requirement: Anyone outraged at the election results has some studying to do. Go read Fox News. Browse Red State. Click on a few Breitbart links. Even, God forbid, peruse Info Wars.

The day after the election, On The Media's Brooke Gladstone argued the radio show — which reports on the media — has a new goal: "To make what seems to have been invisible to us and everyone we know, visible."

It's a worthy goal for us all.

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HALIFAX
TRANSIT

Women's March on Washington gets post-inauguration permit

Police in Washington said Thursday that they have issued a permit for the Women's March on Washington, a demonstration planned for the day after the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump.

The Metropolitan Police

Department said it has issued a permit for the Jan. 21 march to start near the U.S. Capitol. Organizers have said they will march down Independence Avenue, and police said the march is scheduled to disperse at Constitution Avenue near the Washington

Monument.

Police said that on their application, march organizers estimated 200,000 participants.

Organizers hoped to rally at the Lincoln Memorial, but those plans conflicted with other events. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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HALIFAX

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East Aleppo survivors flee

Evacuation seals the fate of rebels' key stronghold



Syrians who were evacuated from rebel-held neighbourhoods arrive in Khan al-Aassal region, in west Aleppo. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Weeping, hobbling on crutches or dragging suitcases, hundreds of survivors of a devastating government bombardment and siege left the last sliver of opposition-held Aleppo on Thursday, an evacuation that sealed the end of the rebellion's most important stronghold and was a watershed moment in Syria's five-year-old civil war.

A smiling President Bashar Assad called it a historic event comparable to the birth of Christ

and the revelation of the Qur'an. A UN official described it as "a black chapter in the history of international relations."

Under a surrender deal brokered by Russia and Turkey, tens of thousands of residents and rebel fighters are being evacuated to opposition-controlled areas in the surrounding countryside.

Eastern Aleppo rose in revolt against Assad in 2012 and battled since then with the western, government-held part of the

city in one of the most horrific and destructive fronts of the civil war.

The rebels' hold in Syria's one-time commercial powerhouse was a major point of pride, and at times it seemed an invulnerable part of what was once a growing opposition-held patch of territory in the north.

But government forces finally surrounded eastern Aleppo and then battered it to pieces. The air and ground campaign by

Syrian troops — backed by Russian warplanes and forces from Assad's regional allies — relentlessly wore away at the enclave.

Hundreds of civilians were killed, and tens of thousands fled to government-held areas. The pocket was reduced to a few blocks packed with the bloodied, exhausted and demoralized but also die-hard opposition forces.

"History is being made," an upbeat Assad proclaimed in a video. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VOICES OF THE DISPLACED

As they find safety, displaced residents from the devastated east of the city describe violence and food shortages to the UNHCR.

We had a house, but it was completely destroyed. It was very shocking to see our home turned to ruins. Bader, 12,

I am very scared of what the future might hold for us, and especially for my daughters.

Aziza, a single mother in her late thirties

We used to be given bags of bread, but then bread stopped and there was just rice. Then there was no rice and the prices of food became so expensive.

Mohammad, 16

SOURCE: UNHCR

RESEARCH

Global warming's fingerprints are on strange weather cases

A new scientific report finds man-made climate change played some role in two dozen extreme weather events last year but not in a few other weird weather instances around the world.

An annual report released Thursday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found climate change was a factor, however small or large, in 24 of 30 strange weather events. They include 11 cases of high heat, as well as unusual winter

sunshine in the United Kingdom, Alaskan wildfires and odd "sunny day" flooding in Miami.

The study documented climate change-gouged weather in Alaska, Washington state, the southeastern United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, China, Japan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the western north Pacific cyclone region, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Ethiopia and southern Africa.

"It has to be measurable. It has to be detectable," said NOAA

scientist Stephanie Herring, co-editor of the report.

Herring highlighted the Miami flooding in September 2015. Because of rising sea levels and sinking land, extremely high tides flooded the streets with 22 inches of water.

"This one is just very remarkable because truly, not a cloud in the sky, and these types of tidal nuisance flooding events are clearly becoming more frequent," she said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NOTICE

Registration of Undertaking for Environmental Assessment ENVIRONMENT ACT

This is to advise that on December 16, 2016 Halifax Water registered the proposed Lake Major Dam Replacement Project for environmental assessment, in accordance with Part IV of the *Environment Act*.

The purpose of the proposed undertaking is to replace the existing Lake Major Dam with a new concrete structure, located approximately 35 m upstream from the existing structure, in the community of Lake Major, Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia. The new dam will maintain a water level of 19.5 m, which is approximately 0.5 m above the existing normal lake level. Pending approval to proceed, construction is anticipated to commence during the spring of 2017 with operations to begin in late 2017.

Copies of the environmental assessment registration information may be examined at the following locations:

- North Preston Community Centre, 44 Simmonds Road, North Preston, NS
- Cole Harbour Public Library, 51 Forest Hills Parkway (Cole Harbour Place), Cole Harbour, NS
- Nova Scotia Environment, 30 Damascus Road, Suite 115, Bedford Commons, Bedford, NS
- EA website (when available) at <http://www.novascotia.ca/nse/ea>

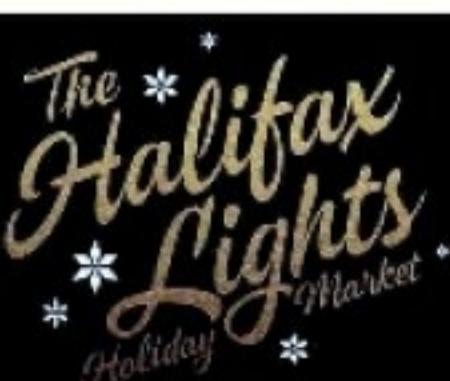
The public is invited to submit written comments to:

Environmental Assessment Branch
Nova Scotia Environment
P.O. Box 442, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 2P8

on or before **January 25, 2017**, or contact the Department at (902) 424-3600, (902) 424-6925 (Fax), or e-mail at EA@novascotia.ca.

All submissions received, including personal information, will be made available for public review upon request.

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Employee health benefits going to the dogs, and cats

SERVICES

Store looks to make fancy pet food part of company plans

Trish Donnelly has worked under celebrated Toronto chef Jamie Kennedy and helmed trendy spots from Oyster Boy on Queen St. W. to Mildred's Temple Kitchen in Liberty Village.

These days the executive chef with the perfect pedigree is making a dog's breakfast on Queen St. E. — and loving it.

As top chef of the new, high-end and healthy pet food store Tom&Sawyer, she still puts her considerable chops to good use, whipping up restaurant quality dishes like sous vide salmon, tuna with sweet potato and Italian beef pasta for a less lippy, if not more yappy, clientele.

"My friends weren't surprised when they found out. They said, 'Well, you like dogs more than people anyway,'" she says with



Kristin Matthews and Peter Zakarow, with dog Sawyer, are owners and co-founders of the Tom&Sawyer. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

a giggle.

Of course, making gourmet grub in a shiny, open kitchen that looks like something you'd see at a top-notch establishment doesn't come cheap (some meals are priced at \$11 a pop.) So

owners Kristin Matthews and Peter Zakarow have partnered with digital upstart League to get the fancy food onto some employee benefit plans.

"This is a driving reason why

League's digital platform, accessed through an app, provides companies with health spending accounts, lifestyle spending accounts and workplace health services for employees.

"We are aware that pets are a huge part of people's lives — especially for millennials," says League founder and CEO Michael Serbinis.

"While many companies offer perks such as 'take your dog to work', only a few companies have started to make veterinary coverage available under employee benefit plans," Serbinis says.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

League is investigating pet-related services and products in our health marketplace," he says, noting he's expecting to see good traction from clients for the offset offering.

Most big insurance companies like Sun Life and Manulife offer flexible benefit packages to employees that provide tax-free services such as physiotherapy and massage therapy. Lifestyle or wellness spending accounts also offer workers taxable benefits such as gym memberships and nutritional supplements — but healthy pet food is pretty new to the mix, he says.

There are also plenty of companies, from Hudson's Bay Financial Services to Home Depot, that offer pet insurance for veterinary services, which pet owners know can be very pricey if their pooch or feline gets sick.

"While many companies offer perks such as 'take your dog to work', only a few companies have started to make veterinary coverage available under employee benefit plans," Serbinis says.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook starting to fight fake news

Facebook is taking new measures to curb the spread of fake news on its social network. It will focus on the "worst of the worst" offenders and partner with outside fact-checkers and news organizations to sort honest news from made-up stories.

The social network will make it easier for users to report fake news when they see it. If enough people report a story as fake, Facebook will pass it to third-party fact-checking organizations.

Stories that flunk the fact check won't be removed from Facebook. But they'll be publicly flagged as "disputed," which will force them to appear lower down in people's news feed. Users can click on a link to learn why that is. And if people decide they want to share the story with friends anyway, they can — but they'll get another warning.

WHY FAKE NEWS MATTERS

Fake political stories have drawn outsized attention because of the possibility that they influenced public perceptions and could have swayed the U.S. presidential election.

There have been dangerous real-world consequences. A fake story about a child sex ring at a Washington, D.C., pizza joint prompted a man to fire an assault rifle inside the restaurant.

FACEBOOK AND FAKE NEWS

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has said that fake news constitutes less than one per cent of what's on Facebook, but critics say that's wildly misleading. For a site with nearly 2 billion users tapping out posts by the millisecond, even one per cent is a huge number, especially since the total includes everything that's posted on Facebook — photos, videos and daily updates in addition to news articles.

FOLLOW THE MONEY

The social network's first public step toward fixing the fake-news problem since the election was a statement barring fake-news sites from using its lucrative ad network. Now, Facebook says it has also eliminated the ability for spammers to masquerade as real news organizations by spoofing domains.

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BANK OF CANADA

New rules to slow debt: Poloz

The Bank of Canada is predicting new mortgage rules will help slow rising household debt levels and the advance of home prices in some markets — two concerns it says pose the biggest risks to the country's financial stability.

The central bank warned Thursday that climbing debt levels, combined with a growing proportion of highly indebted households, have left Canada exposed to economic shocks, such as an event that leads to a significant drop in

employment.

But governor Stephen Poloz said he expects stricter housing finance rules introduced in recent months by federal, provincial and municipal authorities to gradually ease household indebtedness and improve the quality of future borrowing.

In October, Ottawa announced changes aimed at curbing rising debt loads and cooling activity in the hot housing markets like Toronto and Vancouver. The new rules made it tougher for prospective bor-

tors to qualify for mortgages and restricted insurance eligibility for high-ratio mortgages.

"They're pretty well guaranteed to work because they're rules about the qualifying criteria," Poloz said of the measures after the central bank released the latest edition of its semi-annual financial system review.

"Those processes are basically mechanical, but slow because of the large stock (of mortgages)."

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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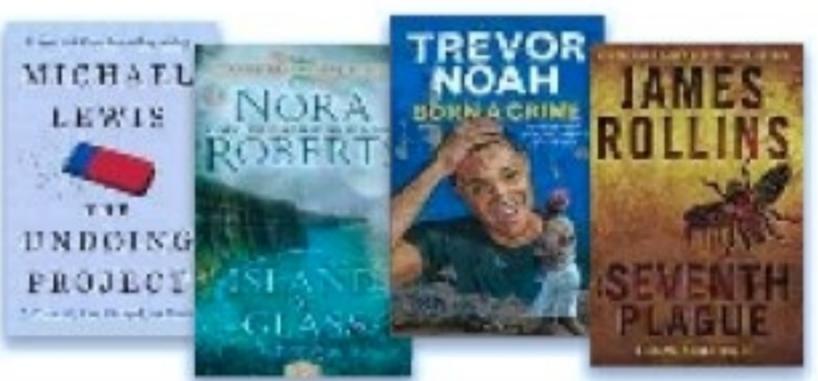


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metro SCIENCE

Your essential daily news

No bones about it: Evolutionary biologists believe humans lack the penis bone our direct ancestors have because we spend less time having sex



DECODED by Genna Buck and Andrés Plana

THIS IS AN ACTUAL DINOSAUR TAIL

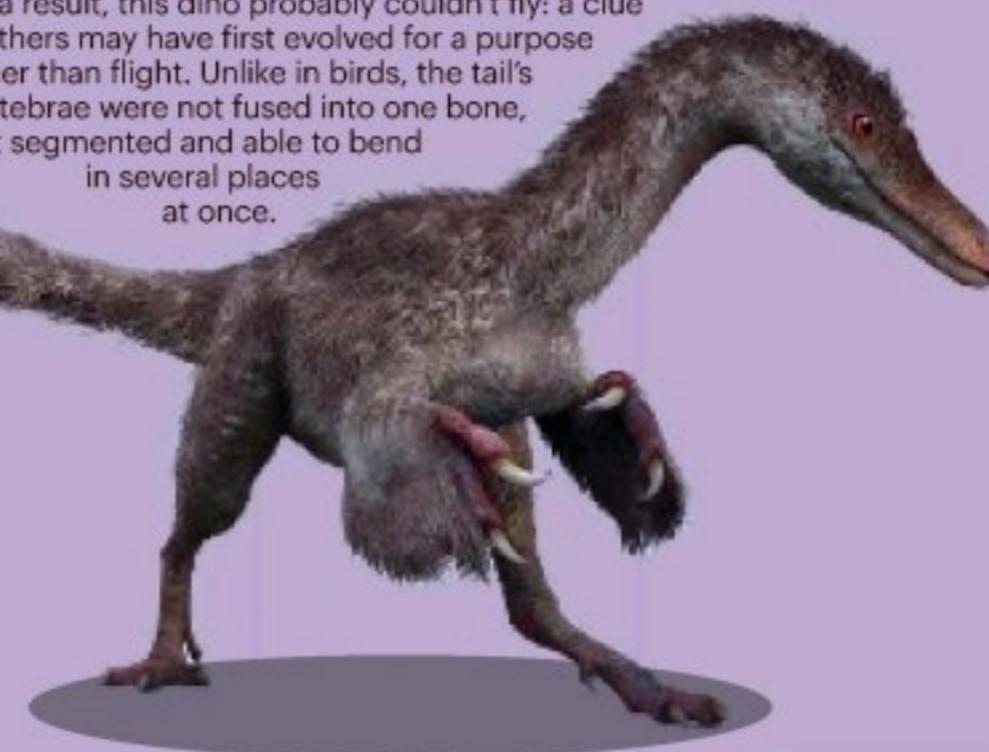
A Chinese scientist browsing a market in Myanmar has stumbled onto **the find of the century**. What first appeared to be a fragment of a bird's tail suspended in 99-million-year old amber in fact belongs to a coelurosaur — a feathered, sparrow-sized dinosaur. **But what is amber and where does it get its enchanting ability to capture an ancient moment and freeze it in time?**



Fair feather find

Using microscopes and a CT scanner, scientists at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum were the first to ever see dinosaur feathers in glorious 3D. They're white and brown, and more delicately structured than modern bird feathers, lacking the strong central rod.

As a result, this dino probably couldn't fly: a clue feathers may have first evolved for a purpose other than flight. Unlike in birds, the tail's vertebrae were not fused into one bone, but segmented and able to bend in several places at once.



Who was this dinosaur?

A pocket-sized member of the T. rex's family, **coelurosauria**. It walked upright and feasted on insects.

Sorry, Jurassic Park fans, scientists are pretty sure **dino DNA can't survive in amber**. Earlier experiments that suggested this was possible seem to have picked up stray DNA from the lab.

FINDINGS
Your week in science



MAGIC MENAGERIE
Scientists have christened a new species *Eriovixia gryffindori*. It's a spider that looks remarkably like the Hogwarts sorting hat.

SOUND SMART
NOMENCLATURE

DEFINITION
Nomenclature is a scientific system for naming and categorizing something, like chemical compounds, animals or time periods.

USE IT IN A SENTENCE
We should adopt formal **nomenclature** for Pokemon. Their names are cutesy and random; they don't provide any useful information.

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That first flash of the Force...

IN FOCUS

A long time ago, in a galaxy not too far away, we were all wowed

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

February 3, 1959 and February 9, 1964. The day the music died and the date it was reborn on the Ed Sullivan Show, both days burned into the collective memories of pop culture fanatics everywhere.

But what about May 25, 1977?

If you were a teenager then chances are you felt the earth shift. It was the day Star Wars opened, kicking off a cultural phenomenon that continues to this day.

This weekend the universe George Lucas unleashed in 1977 grows to include Rogue One: A Star Wars Story. Much-anticipated, the movie is the first of the standalone Star Wars Anthology films and is expected to decimate the competition, Death Star style.

Expect line-ups and packed theatres — box office seers estimate it could pull in somewhere between \$130 million to \$150 million at the U.S. box office this week — but no matter how wild the weekend gets, nothing will match the pandemonium that greeted Star Wars in May, 1977.

To paint a picture of the first blush of Star Wars mania I asked my Facebookers what they remember about that moment a long time ago, in a galaxy (not so) far, far away...

"I remember being so in awe of that legendary opening scene with the giant spaceship coming into picture from the top and filling up the entire screen... ooooo, aaaaah," wrote Glenda Fordham. "The audience gasped in unison."

"Upon leaving the theatre, with my little mind totally blown, I was interviewed by the news," recollects Lesley Mitchell-Clarke, "where I think that I said, 'Anything is now possible cinematically.' I was all of 19."

"My stepbrother, who was seven at the time, was dead set against seeing it," says Tina Cooper, "and then of course saw it at least 50 times and dressed in Star Wars gear and played with Star Wars toys every single day for the rest of his childhood."

"The line-up went right around the block and we ended up sitting in the front row of the balcony," recalled Chris Ball. "I was mesmerized but dad was

bored. Part way through I guess he decided he might as well get comfortable. He took his jacket off and in the process knocked his popcorn over the balcony railing. We got a stern lecture from the manager and almost got thrown out. Fast forward 20 years (1997) and I am now the manager of the same theatre and handing out those stern lectures."

"I was six," remembered Sue Edworthy. "My Dad took me to see it. I fell asleep halfway through. He took me to see it again. I fell asleep halfway through. The seventh time, I finally saw the whole thing. Clearly he had no problem seeing it again, and again, and again."

"It was the first film that I went to more than once in its initial run," said Adrian Gruff. "In the scene where the X-Wings enter the Death Star's trench, I disengaged from the screen just so I could watch everyone's heads do the sideways bob and twist that mine had done on first viewing."

"It was the first time that I had a true inkling as to the energy that religion refers to as 'God.'"

MORE STAR WARS PHOTOS ON THE METRO APP



Rogue One: A Star Wars Story will give another new generation that trademark thrill of facing up to the Force for the very first time. CONTRIBUTED

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story ★★★★
Collateral Beauty ★

HOW RATING WORKS
★★★★ SEE IT
★★★★ WORTHWHILE
★★ UP TO YOU
★ SKIP IT



All Christmas music 'til Dec. 25th



The galaxy's new recruit

In *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, British-Pakistani actor Riz Ahmed plays Bodhi Rook, a former Imperial pilot who takes his technical skills across to the Rebel Alliance. CONTRIBUTED



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INTERVIEW

Riz Ahmed says he was a troublemaker on Star Wars set

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Like a lot of kids Riz Ahmed liked Star Wars. Unlike most kids he grew up to be part of the franchise, playing pilot Bodhi Rook in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*.

"I was a fan," says Ahmed, also known as Riz MC, who earlier this year starred in HBO's *The Night Of*. "I remember watching the films the first time round with my older brother. I was about six or seven years old. They were kind of my only memory of watching any movie at all. They left a massive impact on me. I remember running around with my brother for years, acting out our own weird sci-fi stories. Even though I didn't understand the storyline – I was too young – the level of imagination and detail that went into those movies.... It made an impression."

Yet, while the originals left an impression on the younger Ahmed, it was only when he joined the universe himself that he realized his level of fandom might not have been quite at the level he had thought.

"It's only now that I have

met real Star Wars fans that I realize I wasn't really a fan," he says. "I thought I was. Star Wars fans are dedicated, loyal fans. I think the kind of vibe I've gotten so far is that they are really excited to see a film that both preserves the legacy and the inheritance of the Star Wars saga but is also something a little different, fresh, distinctive and separate from the other films. I think that can be a really tricky balance to achieve but I think they have really done that."

Rogue One is the first standalone Star Wars Anthology film — upcoming movies in the expanded cinematic universe will focus on Han Solo and Boba Fett — and takes place after the formation of the Galactic Empire, shortly before the events of *Episode IV: A New Hope*.

The Rebel Alliance has recruited former criminal Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones) to collaborate with a team to retrieve the blueprints of the Death Star, the Empire's armoured battle station capable of destroying entire planets.

Ahmed plays a recruit, a former Imperial pilot with strong

technical skills. Producer Kathleen Kennedy calls the character "a troublemaker."

"It is interesting she calls Bodhi Rook a troublemaker," Ahmed laughs. "I sometimes wonder if she is talking about me on the film set. Bodhi is somebody who is thrust into a really unfamiliar set of circumstances. He is just an Imperial cargo pilot, an average Joe trying to earn a living. It is a company town he lives in, the occupied planet of Jedha, so he works for the Empire. He's really thrust into a new set of circumstances that force him to reconsider his allegiances and what he's doing in these turbulent times."

Working beside Ahmed are Diego Luna, Donnie Yen and Forest Whitaker, making *Rogue One* the most diverse of all the Star Wars films.

"I think it just makes sense that our film reflects the society around us," says the British Pakistani actor, "and also the audience watching the films. A story like Star Wars is a global story. It belongs to all of us."

"Audiences around the world are excited about Star Wars so it makes sense that when they think about who might be the best actors for these roles they cast their net really wide all around the world. Yeah, we'll have Ben Mendelsohn from Australia, Forest Whitaker from L.A. and Mads Mikkelsen from over here. I'm lucky to have been caught up in this net as well."

It's only now that I have met real Star Wars fans that I realize I wasn't really a fan.

Riz Ahmed

Debutant finds strong voice

INTERVIEW

Cast as Obama in first feature, Derron Terrell strikes a chord

As he prepared to play a young Barack Obama on the big screen, Devon Terrell shed his Australian accent, altered his body language and started practising his part on strangers he met on the streets of New York City.

Barry, which premieres on Netflix on Friday, examines the life of the U.S. president back when he was still a confused student in his junior year at Columbia University.

"I would go onto the streets and practise it. It was that thing of just getting out of your comfort zone," said Terrell, who at the time had never appeared in a feature film.

"If I could do it to a stranger and they could believe me, then I'm sure I could do it on set with an actor."

Terrell said he was struck by how relatable Obama was in the film's script.

"We weren't trying to just throw something in your face

and say 'this used to be the president.' It just felt like if you take out the name Barack Obama, it could have been anybody," he said.

Terrell's co-star, Anya Taylor-Joy, plays a white woman Obama starts dating from his political science class.

For Taylor-Joy, the film tells a universal story.

"I think everyone can connect to it," she said. "I hope people leave feeling a little bit less alone, a little bit like, 'Oh, so the most powerful man in the world felt the way that I felt, that I didn't belong and I couldn't find my scene.'"

That idea of being able to relate to a sitting president also appealed to film director Vikram Gandhi.

"When you're 20 years old and you go to New York for the first time, it's like everybody is a blank slate that is learning from that experience, and everybody at that time in their life is really trying to figure out who they are," he said. "Also all the ideas about race that are happening in it are still extremely relevant right now."

The film sees the young mixed-race Obama struggle to find his place in society, whether it's at a

Harlem house party or at a country club wedding. That period of time in his life turned out to be an important one, Gandhi said.

"This was a time where the birth of his consciousness is happening in college, after which he would decide he had a responsibility to African American culture and work in communities," he said.

The film had a personal connection for Gandhi, who

happened to also attend Columbia and live in the same neighbourhood Obama did in university.

"It was a time in my life where I was just trying to figure out a lot of things but because I lived on that block I just knew, well that's the bodega that's on the block," Gandhi said.

"There were so many different directions he could have gone in and I had the same experience. It

felt natural that this was a story I could tell."

THE CANADIAN PRESS



I would go onto the streets and practise it.

Devon Terrell



Devon Terrell and director Vikram Gandhi. CONTRIBUTED/CHRISTOPHER SMITH/AP



Devon Terrell found relatable ground in *Barry*, Netflix's Barack Obama biopic. CONTRIBUTED/CHRISTOPHER SMITH/AP

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Rising stars from across the planet

Star Wars has always had a wide variety of faces in its films, but, besides a few outliers, the diversity was mainly limited to that of the various creatures inhabiting the planets. Rogue One really bursts through the arbitrary barrier with director Gareth Edwards using a large international cast, including Mexican, Danish, British-Pakistani, Chinese, Australian, African-American and British performers. Meet a few of the new faces:

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



DIEGO LUNA AND ALAN TUDYK

The rebellion's cop team — one man and his droid

Mexican actor Diego Luna wanted so badly to be in a Star Wars film, he said he would have paid to be part of it. He plays Cassian, an intelligence officer for the rebellion, or, a spy charged with leading the dangerous mission that culminates in the rebels stealing the plans for the Death Star. "He's a very lonely character. His best friend is a droid basically — that says a lot about him — and a droid that he reprogrammed!" Luna said. That droid is K-2SO (above with Luna either side of Felicity Jones' heroine Jyn Erso), voiced by American Alan Tudyk, hailed as one of the breakouts of the film for his deadpan humour. "I'd like to think that we're a team. Kind of like a cop team, and I'm the smart-ass cop!" said Tudyk.



BEN MENDELSON AND MADS MIKKELSEN

Death Star's darkest duo

Aussie Ben Mendelsohn's Orson Krennic is the baddie of the group, the one in charge of making sure the Death Star works. Mads Mikkelsen's Galen Erso is a scientist who tried to leave the killer-making ways behind, only to be drawn back in. "As a scientist you have morals but you just dive into a project that will consume you and before it's too late you realize what you're creating," Denmark's Mikkelsen said.



DONNIE YEN AND JIANG WEN

Chinese actors break barriers

Edwards, inspired by George Lucas's love of Akira Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress*, wanted to have two actors who would squabble but still venture out together on a mission. It resulted in Donnie Yen's blind "warrior monk" Chirrut and Jiang Wen's always heavily armed Baze Malbus. "I realized, 'This is something very special. I'm going to make history,'" Yen said. "Hey, I'm the first Chinese actor in the Star Wars universe. That is so rewarding."

QUARANTINE

Heard told Coast clear for her dogs

Actress Amber Heard appears set to return to Australia's Gold Coast to star in the DC Comics blockbuster movie Aquaman a year after she was convicted in the same tourist town of smuggling her pet Yorkshire terriers Pistol and Boo into the country.

The movie, which will also feature Game of Thrones television star Jason Momoa in the lead role, will be shot next year at Village Roadshow Studios near Gold Coast city in a deal that will cost the Australian government 22 million Australian dollars (\$16 million). Treasurer Scott Morrison said Thursday.

Heard, 30, pleaded guilty in a Gold Coast court in April to falsifying an immigration document to conceal the dogs when she and her then husband John-

ny Depp flew into Australia in 2014 for the filming of the latest Pirates of the Caribbean movie in which Depp played pirate Jack Sparrow.

She avoided jail under a deal that included Heard and Depp videoing an awkward public warning against others breaking Australia's strict quarantine laws.

Morrison said Thursday that a "miniature motor home" would be provided for Pistol and Boo if Heard decided to bring them back through the proper quarantine channels.

"We will have a home for them if Amber would like to bring them on to the film set," Morrison told reporters.

The scandal over the dogs was lampooned as Australia's "war on terriers" and unleashed personal hostility be-

tween Depp and Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce.

Joyce, who is now Australia's deputy prime minister, prompted countless parodies by stating: "It's time that Pistol and Boo buggered off back to the U.S.. He then warned that the dogs would be euthanized if they didn't flee the country within 72 hours, which they did with only a few hours to spare.

Depp quipped that ruddy-faced Joyce appeared to be "inbred with a tomato" and voiced fears that "he might explode."

Morrison said on Thursday that he was not concerned by how Joyce might react to Pistol and Boo returning.

"No, everyone knows the rules. Those rules apply to everybody as they did last time," Morrison said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Amber Heard and then husband Johnny Depp landed in hot water in Australia in 2014. AP FILE

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Drama touches death, love and grief

FILM DEVELOPMENT

Star-studded cast opened up script to improvement

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Collateral Beauty had a long Hollywood history before director David Frankel came on board. Hugh Jackman was attached at one point and Rachel McAdams had been approached to play a part.

The long development came to an end when Will Smith signed on to play Howard Inlet, a charismatic advertising kingpin who becomes despondent after the death of his six-year-old daughter.

"When I came on it, it felt like it was written in stone," says Frankel. "Everybody loved the screenplay and we were going in three months and then people started whispering, 'I wish we could fix that.' So it turned out to be a pretty normal development process where we tried a lot of stuff."



Edward Norton, director David Frankel and Will Smith behind the scenes on the set of drama *Collateral Beauty*. BARRY WETCHER

"Once the actors got involved, Professor Will Smith, Professor Edward Norton and Professor Kate Winslet, there was a lot more writing. Mostly condensing. Edward had this brilliant vision of the movie as a screw-

ball comedy, which I think was really smart. Will always said, 'We have to make the first half of the movie as funny as possible so that we don't kill people.' We worked on that."

The changes continued into

the shooting. In the story Howard spends his nights practising self-therapy, writing angry letters to the abstractions of Time, Love and Death demanding answers as to why his child was taken. In the original script he

“Of course Will said, ‘God works in mysterious ways.’ But Will Smith got his way. Big surprise.”

David Frankel

met the abstractions, personified by Jacob Latimore, Keira Knightley and Helen Mirren, in a different order than in the finished film.

"It was written where he first ran into Love, then Time then Death," says Frankel. "We shot them in the order, Death, Time, Love so as we were approaching Love Will and I were still arguing about whether Love should be first or last in the sequence.

"We had prepped for six months up to that moment thinking Love was first. He came to me the day before and said, 'I think Love should be last.' I fought him tooth and nail about it because I really thought that moment on the train when he confronts Death was the pivotal moment and then it rained and because of the weather (the shots) wouldn't have matched. The sequence wouldn't have made sense.

"Of course Will said, 'God works in mysterious ways.' But Will Smith got his way. Big sur-

prise."

The movie details the anguish

Howard feels and the steps his

friends take to help him recon-

nect with the world.

"I have seen some pretty profound grief," says Frankel. "My wife lost her mom six years ago and grief really can distort someone's connection to the universe. I learned you don't just get over it. That's why the line Helen (Mirren) has, I think is the most profound line in the movie. 'Nothing is really ever dead if you look at it right.'

"That I thought was really beautiful. That is how we all live on, in memory, not in fact."

It may seem like an odd subject for a Christmas film but Frankel says, "In holiday movies you always want a sense of hope. That's ultimately what we dreamed of for this movie."

"I know when Will saw it for the first time he ran to hug Willow who was in the audience with him. People want to connect and realize the fragility of our time here."

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INTERVIEW

Will Smith channeled grief

Will Smith had already begun researching his role for *Collateral Beauty* when he learned that his father was terminally ill.

Smith said at the film's world premiere in New York on Monday that he had to channel the emotions of that tragic news into a demanding film role. Smith's father, Willard Carroll Smith Jr., died on Nov. 7.

"My father was diagnosed and given six weeks, so you know, to be hit with that in the process and then what we decided to do was just use the preparation of the character to actually deal with what my father was experiencing," Smith said. "It became our way of saying goodbye, essentially. It was a really beautiful confluence of art and life."

Smith stars in the film as a father who suffers a great tragedy and begins to question the point of existence.

"It is such a beautiful concept. It's a guy that experiences a loss and gets furious at the universe, and writes these letters to Love, Time and Death, and his mind is so twisted that he mails the letters. And then, Love, Time and Death respond. You know, it's that beautiful Christmas twist to it, but dealing with real issues," Smith said.



Will Smith as Howard and Jacob Latimore as Raffi in *Collateral Beauty*. CONTRIBUTED

The film also stars Helen Mirren in the role of Death. She admitted to loving the script, and felt it shared the same vibe as Christmas classics like *It's a Wonderful Life* and *A Christmas Carol*.

"There was something very, very true in the centre of it. And kind of as a Christmas movie, you know it's kind of a pretty cool Christmas gift of a movie," Mirren said.

Edward Norton, who plays Smith's best friend and partner in the film, also said he saw a

strong similarity with the film to holiday classics like *It's a Wonderful Life*.

"They straddle this very difficult balance between, obviously being very heart-winning and heart-warming and hopeful. But if you think about it, they touch on very dark and difficult things. Jimmy Stewart is in such despair he's going to a bridge to jump, right? But somehow they manage to be about deep and important things, while also being a lot of fun," Norton said.

Can Moonlight spark a black gay renaissance?

ANALYSIS

Coming-of-age story explores issue rarely seen in mainstream

Neil Armstrong
For Torstar News Service

The acclaimed drama *Moonlight* has become a leading awards contender this season, giving hope for diversity in the year after #OscarsSoWhite.

But the story it tells, of a young black man slowly coming to terms with his homosexuality, is one rarely seen in mainstream culture — until recently that is. On film, on television and onstage, there seems to be a sudden convergence of art forms telling the stories of black queer people, especially males.

Moonlight joins the similarly themed 2015 indie film *Blackbird*, plus the hip-hop drama *Empire* on Fox, which introduced a gay love interest for Jussie Smollett's character Jamal earlier this year, and the complicated, diverse LGBTQ characters of *Orange Is the New Black*.

Onstage in Toronto, black queer characters were front and centre in productions this year including *Secrets of a Black Boy*, *How Black Mothers Say I Love You* and, notably, in *Black Boys*, a "timely exploration of queer male blackness" that just ended a run at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.

Are these productions part of a "black queer renaissance" as some have called it?

In an interview with the Los Angeles Times before *Moonlight* had its first public screening at the Telluride Film Festival, director Barry Jenkins said, "This movie was made for anybody who has ever felt other or like they can't be themselves and be accepted in society."

Compared to now, in the '90s such content was almost nonexistent.

There were exceptions, such as Jeffrey Wright's portrayal of the title artist in the 1996 movie *Basquiat*, and Queen Latifah's portrayal of a very proud lesbian in *Set It Off*.

And then there was Will Smith's intriguing yet problematic lead in the 1993 movie *Six Degrees of Separation* (played onstage by Courtney B. Vance).

At the time there was some controversy over Smith's portrayal of a gay character — a



Actor Ashton Sanders plays one of three stages of Chiron, the focus of *Moonlight*, Barry Jenkins' lauded coming-of-age story. CONTRIBUTED

lying, promiscuous one at that — and what it might mean for his career. If anything, it helped.

Fast forward to now and Les Fabian Brathwaite of Out Magazine writes: "For the first time since perhaps the Harlem Renaissance, the souls of queer black folk have been depicted on our own terms as we take control of our narratives. . . . This is the new renaissance."

Thomas Olajide, one of the stars of *Black Boys*, thinks it's a matter of serendipity to have a play he and his co-creators had been working on for four years come out at the same time that *Moonlight* is picking up award season buzz, including six Golden Globe nominations this week.

"It just seems like it's the climate for these stories to be unearthed very naturally," he says. "Perhaps we're all reaching a level of fatigue with not hearing those stories."

His co-star, Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, says "it's not just males but a lot of female queer people of colour (who) are really driving" the surge of such stories, at least on Toronto stages.

"Our communities have always existed," says playwright dibi young anitafrika (She Mami Wata & The Pussy WitchHunt). "Whose visibility validates this idea of a renaissance?"

Having worked in the arts for 20 years, she notes, "What I can say is I do see a change in the

visibility of black queerness in more dominant public spaces."

But Kimahli Powell, who directed *Secrets of a Black Boy* and sits on the board of the Inside Out LGBT Film Festival, says we shouldn't expect this supposed renaissance to continue.

"No doubt that *Moonlight* is a seminal work and its breakthrough is important," he says. "Yet when these moments happen — and they have in the past — we hope Hollywood has embraced storytelling and yet things remain the same."

"#OscarsSoWhite was just last year."

In terms of queer cinema, Powell notes people thought *Brokeback Mountain* would open doors for more movies representing LGBT people. That was a decade ago and little has changed.

"We definitely should celebrate that these stories happen to be shared at this moment but, unless there is a deeper shift in decision-making, we shouldn't expect more black queer art anytime soon."



This movie was made for anybody who has ever felt other or like they can't be themselves and be accepted in society.

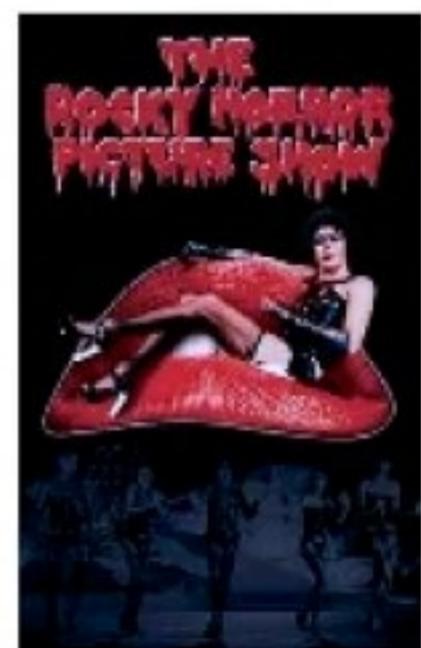
Barry Jenkins, *Moonlight* director

Join a cult

Not all iconic movies were box-office blockbusters when they were first released. Sometimes it takes a mixture of luck, patience, finding the right audience and big changes in the industry before a film really takes off. Here are four movies that earned cult status against all odds:

The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975):

Though the stage musical it was based on was a sensation, the movie flopped twice before it became part of the midnight movie craze of the late '70s. Midnight screenings, lax distribution rules, and audience participation went on to make it the longest-running release in film history.



CONTRIBUTED BY HOLLYWOOD SUITE

And Now For Something Completely Different (1971):

Independently financed by a Playboy executive who was certain Monty Python's Flying Circus could be repackaged for American audiences, this movie proved to be a dud on its initial release. However, once the Monty Python TV show was broadcast on PBS in its original format, the film was re-released to great financial and cultural success among fans eager for more.

Attack of the Killer Tomatoes (1978): This schlock horror parody recouped its modest budget, but was critically panned and didn't make any real box office waves. That is until younger audiences discovered the home video release. The film's second life on video-store shelves generated enough buzz to justify the filming of sequels a decade later, and videogame and cartoon spinoffs in the '90s.

Heavy Metal (1981): This Canadian classic had a respectable

box office draw for an animated sci-fi fantasy film based on a counter-culture magazine, but that success was eclipsed by a soundtrack album full of massive '80s rock hits. The popularity of the soundtrack was nearly solely responsible for the film's cult status, since music licensing issues kept it from home video for over a decade, only allowing it to be seen occasionally on TV, or as a midnight movie in theatres.

Rediscover some of the most beloved cult films of all time.

The Hollywood Suite Free Preview is on now until Jan. 5. Enjoy the best movies of the '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s uncut and commercial-free on four HDTV channels and On Demand, available on most TV providers.

See all these films on Hollywood Suite this month. Catch a cult film triple bill of And Now For Something Completely Different, Attack of the Killer Tomatoes and The Rocky Horror Picture Show, Dec. 17 on the Hollywood Suite '70s Movies channel and ring in the new year with Heavy Metal on the Hollywood Suite '80s Movies channel Dec. 31. Learn more at hollywoodsuite.ca/freepreview.

HOLLYWOOD SUITE



The making of a female serial killer

FILM

The Eyes of my Mother is about an evil woman with good intent

Chris Alexander
For Metro Canada

Ever since Roman Polanski trapped Catherine Deneuve in a Paris apartment and watched her lose her mind in 1965's *Repulsion*, horror cinema has had an enduring infatuation with the psychotic woman.

There's something unsettling about this dynamic, taking our hard-wired societal perceptions of femininity and twisting them, making them unstable and often evil.

Director Nicolas Pesce's alarming black and white psychodrama *The Eyes of my Mother* is another in this unending line of crazy-lady shockers, and it's also one of the best films of 2016.

Charting the damaged upbringing of an upstate New York farm girl named Francisca and her even more broken and

lethal adult life, the film stars newcomer Kika Magalhaes in a bravura yet muted performance.

Magalhaes is even more impressive because no matter Francisca's transgressions, she manages to make the character sympathetic and someone we — against our better judgement — deeply care about.

"I never saw her as serial killer," Magalhaes told Metro on the cusp of the film's limited release this Friday.

"I saw her as loving. All the horrific acts she commits come from a deep need for affection. She doesn't know how to express love because she was never shown this. She can't bear to see people leave her and I think that she thinks that she's always doing the right thing. It's not as simple as just good and evil."

The Eyes of my Mother does see Francisca committing murder and worse in order to sate her illness, but the film is not exploitation, nor does it revel in a high body count and gratuitous

bloodshed. Still, no child should be let near the movie as it's about as dark and depressing as the genre gets. Credit Pesce and Magalhaes' close collaboration during pre-production on ensuring that Francisca is a fully fleshed out female, not just some nickel and dime boogeyman.

"I was on board when the film was just an idea," the actress explains.

"Nick and I talked and developed the character together. And the script changed so much from the beginning to where it ended up. Originally, it

was all killing, killing and more killing. Then, we had a religious allegory driving it and then it just became her story. Nicolas made sure I watched all the key Hitchcock films, Under the Skin, the Lars von Trier movies and then I researched serial killers like Ted Bundy and maniacs like Charles Manson. To be honest, I felt like I was going a bit crazy myself during the process!"

Since its divisive premiere at

All the horrific acts she commits come from a deep need for affection.

Actress Kika Magalhaes



The Eyes of my Mother actress Kika Magalhaes says she went a little bit crazy preparing for the role. HANDOUT

Sundance earlier this year ("at least 30 people walked out," Magalhaes says), *The Eyes of my Mother* has gone on to festival success and great acclaim and was just released theatrically in the U.S. last week. But because

it was Magalhaes' first feature film and because she was so creatively involved, the actress is genuinely concerned that she has been spoiled by such a wonderful first cinematic dance partner.

"I've been getting offers and am working a lot on other projects. But it's a problem. I keep trying to offer my ideas while we work and, well, it's just not the same. It's very frustrating, in fact."

Tara MacDonald
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ROYAL FAMILY

Harry seen with T.O. actress

Prince Harry and girlfriend Meghan Markle have been photographed together for the first time, walking hand-in-hand on a busy London street on their way to a show.

The Sun newspaper reports they attended The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time at the Gielgud Theatre in the West End on Wednesday.

They walked among a holiday crowd along Shaftesbury Avenue, the newspaper reports.

Markle, 35, is a Toronto resident and actress.

The tabloid reports she has been staying at Harry's cottage on the Kensington Palace grounds. The British media reported that the prince visited Markle in Toronto earlier this month.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



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WORLD EXCLUSIVE: First pictures of Prince Harry and girlfriend Meghan Markle on date in London [thesun.co.uk/news/2401773/](http://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2401773/)

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle were photographed together for the first time by U.K. newspaper The Sun. TWITTER SCREENSHOT



INSTA-OUNCEMENT
LOCHTE AND FIANCÉE
EXPECTING Ryan Lochte has jumped in the pool to announce he and Kayla Rae Reid are expecting a baby. The controversial Olympic swimmer and the former Playboy model shared pictures on Instagram of Lochte under water kissing Reid's tiny baby bump. Lochte says his "Christmas gift came early this year." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/INSTAGRAM/@RYANLOCHTE



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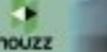
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Boutique stays in Tel Aviv

For decades, the tourist landscape in Tel Aviv was dominated by mediocre beachfront hotels. Over the last several years, beautiful boutique properties have changed the city's hospitality scene and contributed to Tel Aviv's increasingly chic image. These accommodations are sleeker, smaller and often-affordable. **SARAH TRELEAVEN/FOR METRO**



MIDTOWN

Brown Beach House

This property is perfect for visitors looking for a hip and affordable small beachside hotel in an increasingly sophisticated part of the city. The giant neon pink flamingo out front and the sunny yellow furnishings set a playful tone. Some rooms have enormous ocean-facing balconies, and all have bright yellow or blue accents. The neighbourhood is ideal for exploring both the south of the city (hipper) and the north (more polished).



ALLENBY AND ROTHSCHILD

Hotel Montefiore

The original boutique beachhead is the Montefiore, which opened in 2008 and sits on a quiet side street. The Montefiore is all grace and discretion. The lobby restaurant — a fusion menu offering terrific pork and cabbage gyoza and wonderfully rich truffled goat cheese ravioli — is full of palm fronds and Art Deco light fixtures. The hotel's bedrooms are equally elegant, and in-room libraries offer a great selection of authors.



STEPS FROM ROTHSCHILD BOULEVARD

The Norman

The Norman is comprised of two 1920s buildings that still retain their original grandeur. The palette of creams and soft greys is complemented by Bauhaus and Art Deco touches. This 50-room hotel serves Mediterranean and Japanese cuisine, and showcases work by Israeli artists. Further cultural enrichment is provided through bespoke tours, including food tours of the Carmel Market and historic perspectives on Jaffa.



CENTRAL TEL AVIV

The Poli House

Canadian Karim Rashid is the designer responsible for The Poli House — the high-design (pod chairs, neon) new property that opened its doors in November. This stunning boutique hotel was carved out of a 1934 Bauhaus wonder in central Tel Aviv, and is the product of a three-year modernization process that remained loyal to the building's heritage. The focus of this 40-room property is a massive panoramic rooftop space with an infinity pool, cocktail bar and tapas menu. There's also a ground floor "cultural centre," complete with gallery space and design bookstore.



New bookings only made between November 29, 2016 and December 18, 2016 for travel from December 1, 2016 and completed by April 30, 2017. Select packages and departure dates only. Minimum 7-night stay required. Applicable to Economy Class only. Subject to availability at time of booking. Subject to change without notice. Offers expire at 11:59 p.m. ET on the date indicated. Flights operated by Air Canada or Air Canada Rouge. For applicable terms and conditions, consult www.aircanadavacations.com. Holder of Quebec permit #702566. TICO registration #50013537. BC registration #32229. ■ Air Canada Vacations is a registered trademark of Air Canada, used under license by Touram Limited Partnership, 1440 St. Catherine W., Suite 600, Montreal, QC.

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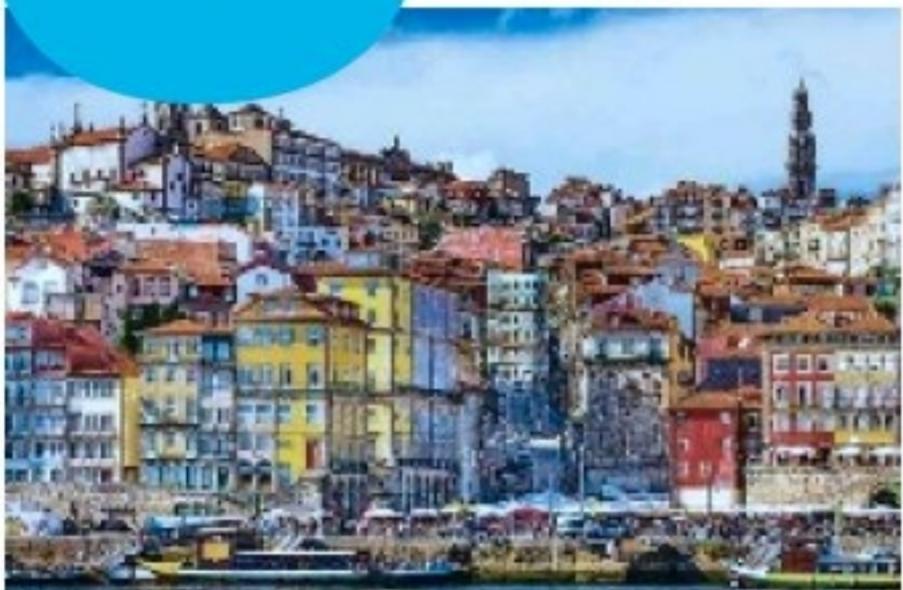
Playa Costa Verde

5

HOTTEST DESTINATIONS FOR TRAVEL IN 2017

Want to travel in the new year, but still not sure exactly where you're headed? Perhaps this list can help. From the in-your backyard destinations to the far, far away, here are some of the world's must-see destinations in 2017.

LOREN CHRISTIE/FOR METRO



1 Portugal

Due to cheap hotel rates and mouth-watering cuisine Portugal has risen to the top of many travellers' lists. Air Transat is increasing its direct flight service from Montreal and Toronto to both Porto and Lisbon and Air Canada Rouge is adding new flights to the Portuguese capital in summer 2017. For foodies, Exodus Travels has launched a collection of guilt-free vacations for people who want to hike, eat and drink their way through Portugal's Douro Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its award-winning wine.

2 Iceland

Thanks to its' stunning and varied natural beauty and a series of viral ad campaigns Iceland continues to be a top draw. Research by youth travel operator Contiki has revealed that the most desired travel experience for 18-35 year olds in Canada is to bathe in Iceland's famous Blue Lagoon.

3 Egypt

G Adventures reports an eight percent increase in travellers year over year heading to Egypt. Although numbers aren't what they were pre-revolution, it's a great time to visit some of the world's most historic monuments while avoiding the crowds and helping this former tourism giant get back on its feet.

4 Cambodia

A recent survey by Booking.com ranks Cambodia as a top pick for 2017. The recent discovery of an ancient city below the stunning temple complex of Angkor Wat has further heightened interest among Canadians. Before you go check out First They Killed My Father, a biography about the Cambodian genocide.

5 Canada

With the 150th anniversary of Confederation taking place there's never been a better time to explore at home. The epicentre of action will be the nation's capital with more than 150 events planned, but there will be plenty going on elsewhere, with national parks waiving entrance fees and Montreal celebrating its 375th.

3 days left!

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Messier blown away by Jagr's longevity

NHL

Czech player poised to become 2nd in all-time points

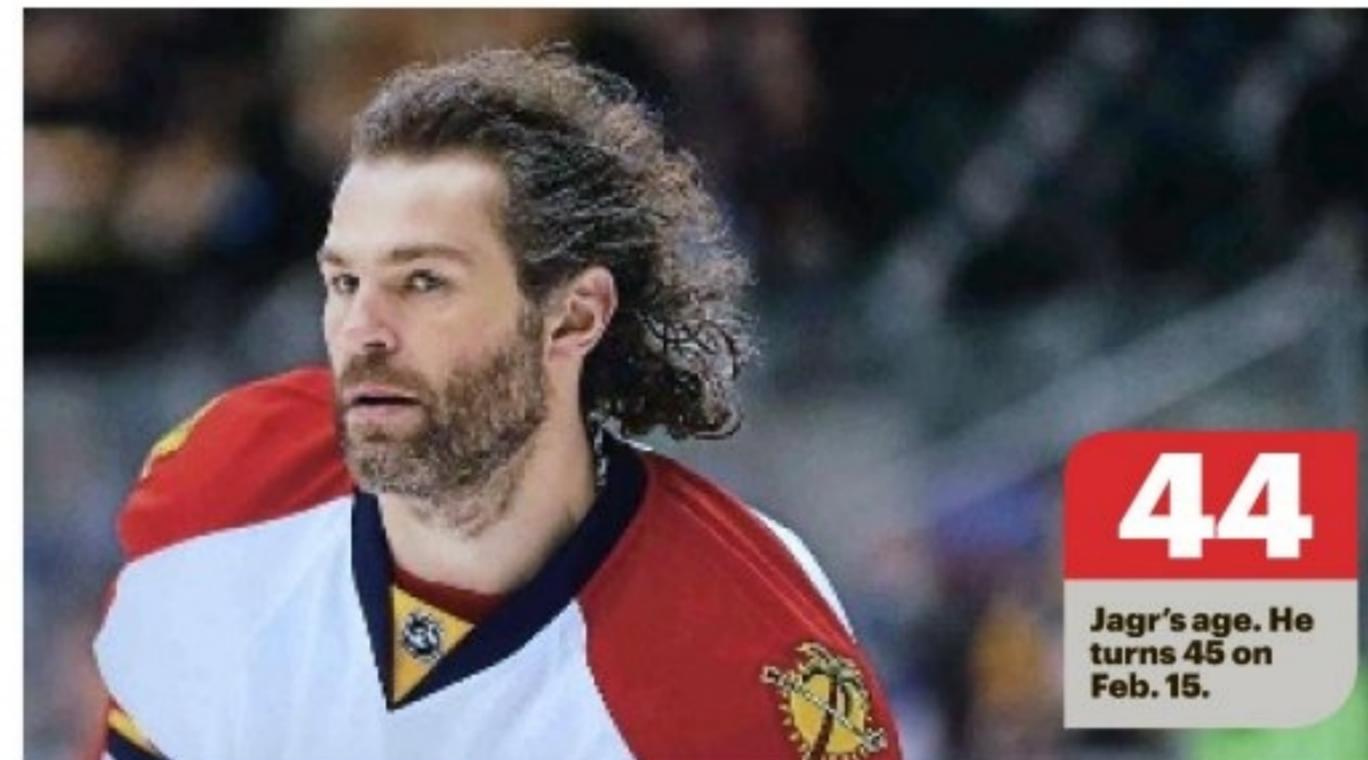
Whether as a flashy rising star or as a battle-tested veteran, Jaromir Jagr has impressed NHL legend Mark Messier for more than a quarter century.

"When (Jagr) came into Pittsburgh he dazzled us with his power and his skill and his overall game," said Messier. "Later on in his career he's kind of inspired us with his passion and dedication."

"He's played long enough to understand what the game means to him as a person and as a player."

Poised to be overtaken by the 44-year-old Jagr for second on the NHL's all-time points list, Messier reflected Thursday about the Czech superstar's accomplishment in what has become increasingly a young man's game.

"The only way you can play, and do what he's doing right now, is to make sure you are putting in the time for your conditioning and taking care of yourself," said Messier. "The game has to be the No. 1 priority in your life."



Panthers right-winger Jaromir Jagr had 1,883 NHL points over his career heading into action on Thursday night. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

because it takes a lot of time to prepare each and every game, let alone each and every season.

"You've got to give Jaromir a lot of credit for what he's been able to do early in his career, and then maybe even more credit for how he's been able to sustain himself."

Messier, who passed Gordie Howe's point total of 1,850 for second all-time

in his final NHL season back in 2003-04, finished his career with 1,887 points. Jagr grabbed third place from Howe in March and sat at 1,883 points heading into Thursday's game between his Florida Panthers and the Winnipeg Jets.

Wayne Gretzky's all-time mark of 2,857 points isn't going to be equalled by Jagr, or likely anyone else for that matter.

In my own mind he surpassed me a long time ago.

Mark Messier on Jaromir Jagr approaching his NHL points total

Jagr joined the Pittsburgh Penguins in 1990 and won two Stanley Cups alongside Lemieux. He has gone onto play for seven more NHL franchises, but also spent three seasons in the KHL where he amassed 146 points.

Messier scored his 1,887 points in 1,756 NHL games, while Jagr has suited up 1,659 times in North America.

"This is kind of anticlimactic for me in a way," said Messier. "I understand the amount of time he put in overseas."

"In my own mind he surpassed me a long time ago."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA

Beloved broadcaster Sager dies at 65

Craig Sager never once thought about giving up as he battled cancer for more than two years.

"Man, life is too beautiful, too wonderful, there's just too many things," he said in late August. "It's not just you. It's your family and kids and all. Fight. Fight until the end. Fight as hard as you can."

The end for the beloved TNT broadcaster came Thursday when the man known as much for his outrageous wardrobe as his relationships with the NBA's elite succumbed to the disease he fought so hard

to overcome. He was 65.

"Craig Sager was a beloved member of the Turner family for more than three decades and he has been a true inspiration to all of us," Turner president David Levy said in a statement. "There will never be another Craig Sager. His incredible talent, tireless work ethic and commitment to his craft took him all over the world covering sports."

His son, Craig Jr., posted a loving video tribute to his father, tweeting: "We packed a lifetime and then some into these 28 years together."



Craig Sager
GETTY IMAGES

Sager's passing brought out condolences from every corner of the NBA and Hall of Famer Larry Bird expressed what many were feeling.

"He was as identifiable with the NBA as any player or coach," Bird said in a statement. "The league will not be the same without him."

Magic Johnson echoed those sentiments on Twitter.

"The NBA family lost a legend

who changed the way sideline reporters did their job. RIP Craig Sager," Johnson said.

Sager had a third bone marrow transplant at the end of August in Houston to fight an aggressive form of leukemia.

He announced in April 2014 that he had been diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia, and he missed the playoffs and much of the following season as he underwent two bone marrow transplants. He revealed in March 2016 that his leukemia was no longer in remission.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

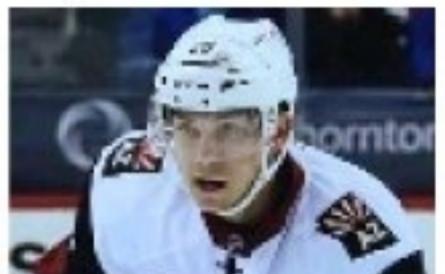
HOCKEY

Canadian juniors low on star power

Without an obvious star player to carry the pressure and expectations, Canada's team for the world junior hockey championship will be all about teamwork, speed and desire.

The final 22-man roster that emerged from this week's four-day selection camp in Boisbriand, Que., is deep in very good players, such as 2015 third overall NHL draft pick Dylan Strome and Ontario Hockey League scoring leader Taylor Raddysh, but doesn't have a Connor McDavid or a John Tavares to claim the spotlight.

"We want to be a complete team," said coach Dominique Ducharme, the Drummondville Voltigeurs coach and general manager who led the Halifax Mooseheads to the 2013 Mem-



Dylan Strome GETTY IMAGES

ial Cup. "We've got speed, skill.

"We're reliable. We can defend. We're good at putting pressure on the other team. We want to put all that together."

The heat will be on Canada after a quarter-final elimination from last year's world junior event by host Finland.

And this year the stakes may be higher in Montreal and Toronto, where Canada won gold in two years ago. THE CANADIAN PRESS

SPONSORSHIP

Tiger signs deal to use new golf ball

One tournament into his return was all Tiger Woods needed to strike a deal with Bridgestone to play its golf ball.

Bridgestone Golf said Thursday it has signed Woods to a multi-year agreement in which he will play and promote the golf ball. Woods effectively became a free agent for equipment deals when Nike decided to stop making clubs and golf balls and instead focus on apparel.

Bridgestone becomes the first new equipment company that

Woods has endorsed since he turned pro 20 years ago. He signed with Titleist (equipment) and Nike (footwear and clothing) in 1996, and his switch to all Nike equipment began with its golf ball in May 2000.

Terms of the contract were not disclosed.

Woods recently returned to the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas after having not played for 15 months while recovering from back surgeries.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Major League Soccer plans to expand to 28 teams

Major League Soccer commissioner Don Garber announced plans Thursday for the league's expansion to 28 teams, including a deadline for owners to apply and a new franchise fee.

The fee for the two teams expected to be granted next year is jumping to \$150 million. Garber also set a Jan. 31, 2017, deadline for interested potential owners or ownership groups to apply.

The league recently expanded to 22 teams.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Top Euro clubs unite against expanded World Cup

FIFA has found a difficult opponent to president Gianni Infantino's plan to expand the World Cup to 48 teams.

A group of 220 of Europe's top clubs called on Infantino on Thursday not to increase the tournament from its 32-team format.

The European Club Association said the number of games played each season "has already reached an unacceptable level."

Infantino wants 48 teams at the 2026 World Cup.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Herd won't make any risky trades

QMJHL

GM Russell is happy with group and will play it safe

Adam Richardson
For Metro | Halifax

The Halifax Mooseheads are wrapping up a solid first half of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League season. With the annual trade period opening on Sunday, general manager Cam Russell continues to evaluate his young and talented squad.

"What I will say is, I like our hockey team," Russell said. "We have great character, skilled rookies and veterans and it's a nice combination to build upon. That said, if there are moves to make as an organization, we'll look at what's best for the hockey club and time will tell what direction we're headed come the January 6th (deadline)."

Russell said loading up and sacrificing the future for a run is "not our style" and said it can be a "dangerous game". Head coach Andre Tourigny seemed to agree with that assessment.

"(Trades) are not for me to say, but I like the team we have and I really enjoy working with the younger guys," Tourigny said. "We've already seen a lot of growth in the first half, and I'd like to work with them more, continue that development and keep that environment."

Despite a current four-game losing streak, the Mooseheads enter the trade period with a 15-14-3 record. It would appear

+ ELSEWHERE

A few blockbuster trades are already reportedly complete, including the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles sending star forward Pierre-Luc Dubois to the Blainville-Boisbriand Armada.

There's also the human element to these deals — Russell explains he rarely comments about possible personnel moves because, after all, these are teens in the spotlight. From a players' perspective, it can be a trying time seeing friends move on.

"Trades are tough because we spend so much time together, we're like brothers," said Keigan Goetz, a 20-year-old forward who played previously in the Ontario Hockey League. "But I've also been in situations where you come to a new team, and within a week you have a new family. That's hockey."



Kevin Resop, who started the season as the team's No. 1 netminder, is one of the team's veterans who has struggled. JEFF HARPER/METRO

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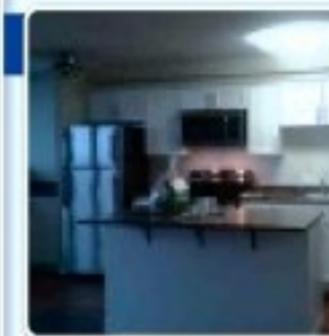
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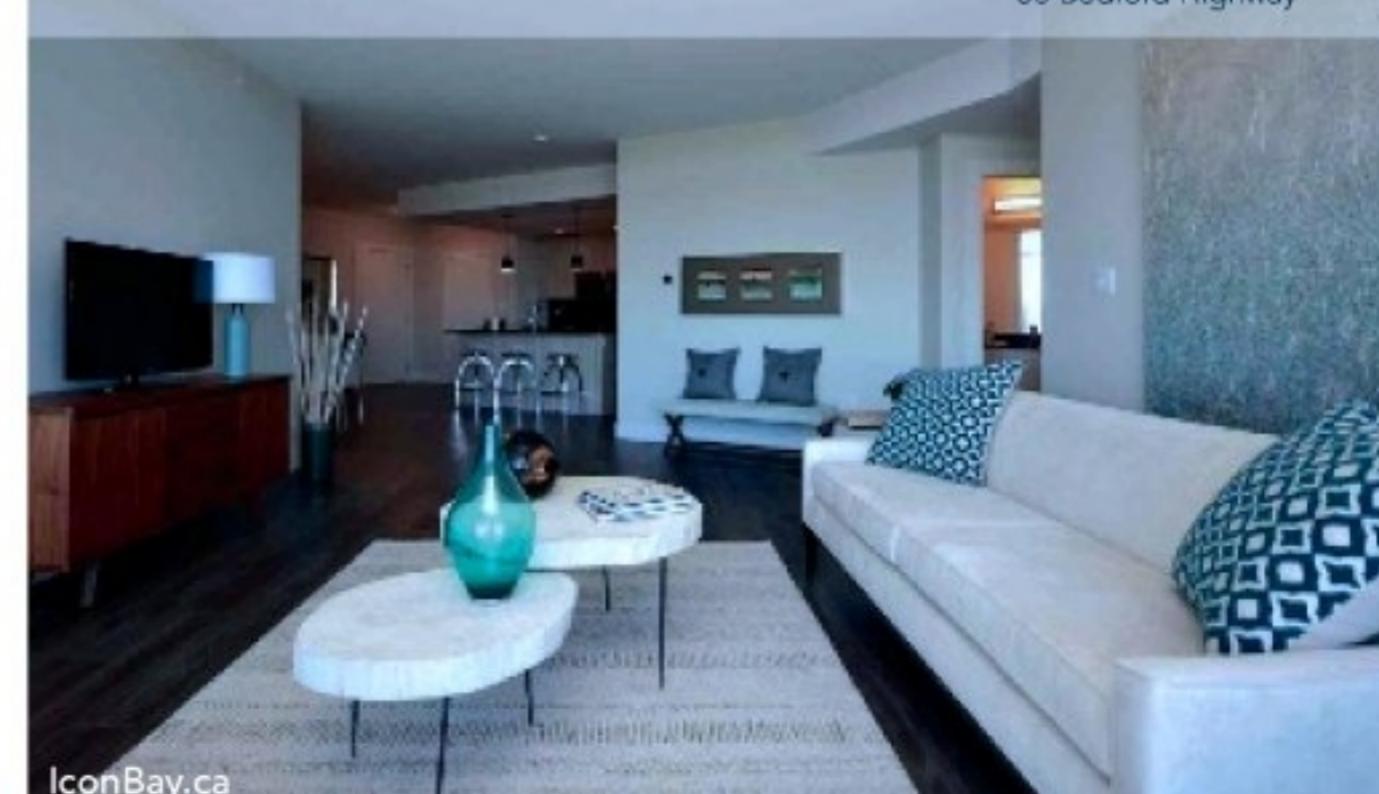


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1 teaspoon olive oil
1/2 a head of Boston bibb lettuce
4 pieces of multi grain bread, toasted
sea salt

Directions

1. Cut tomato and lay out on a plate. Coat with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt. Let stand.

2. Meanwhile, mash avocado in a medium bowl and then add lemon juice and torn basil. Mix until smooth.

3. Toast bread and then smear about a tablespoon and a half of the avocado spread onto the bread. Finish by adding tomato slices and a few pieces of lettuce.

4. Cut in half or in quarters and serve with some cucumber slices.

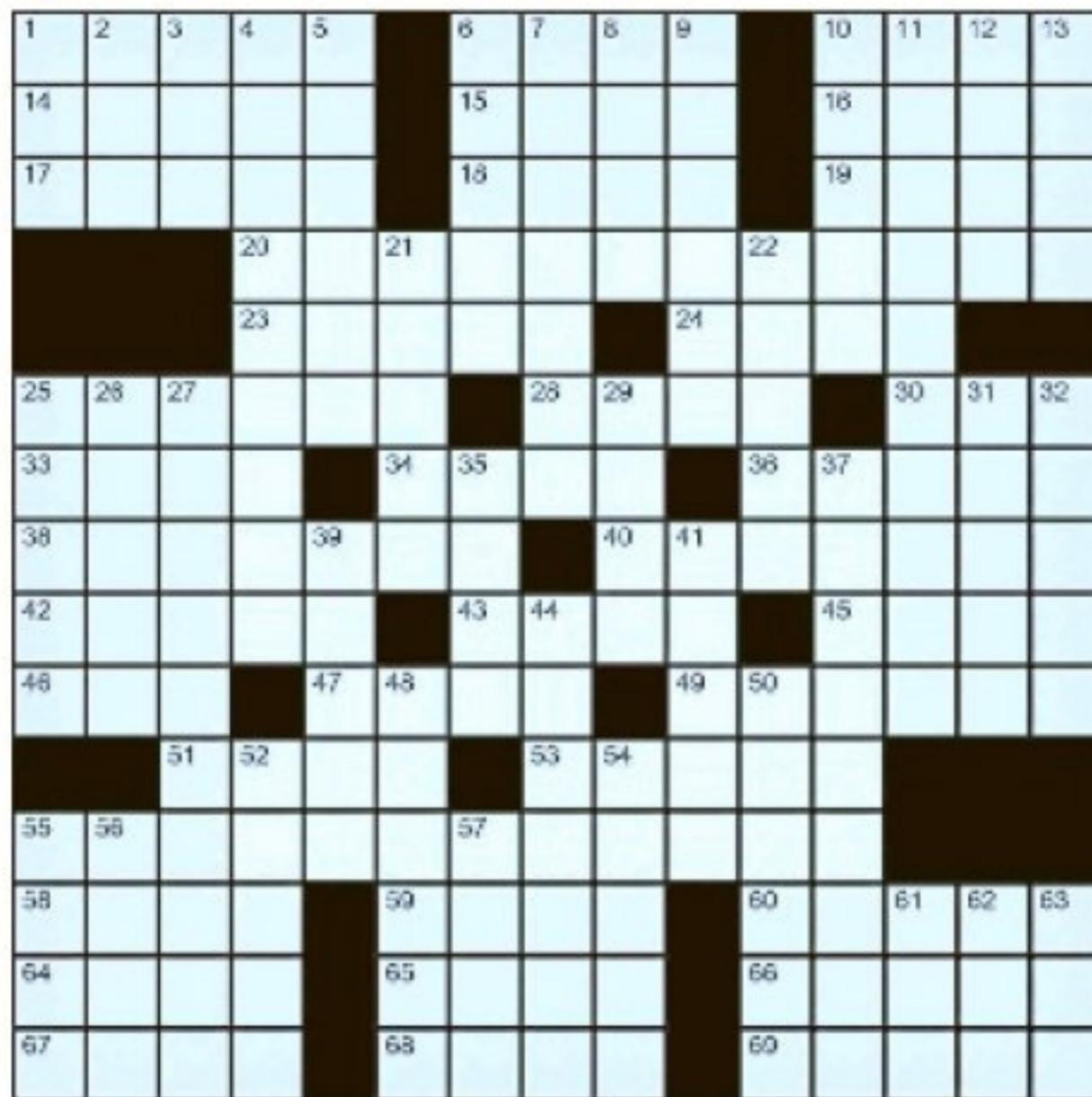
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ACROSS

- Australian actor Mr. Bana's
- "Sure ___ standing here..."
- Ladies
- "Well, obviously, Sherlock!" 2 wds.
- Ms. Rowlands of "The Notebook" (2004)
- Prefix to 'matic'
- Mouthwash brand
- Car rental company
- River of Russia
- Make the best of a fierce Winter day all bundled up in a toque, scarf and mittens: 3 wds.
- "Do you have a pencil ___ I can borrow?"
- All square
- King Arthur's nephew Knight
- Julie Harris' role in "East of Eden" (1955)
- Initials-sharers of Emilio Estevez's actor brother
- Roman love god
- "Sesame Street" character
- Stage stuff
- Ontario town; or, Ms. Lohan
- Maneuvered the motor vehicle
- "Then...?": 2 wds.
- Wealthy
- Canvas for a survey
- Check/determine
- Starring role
- Housing market
- Staircase support
- "Then...?": 2 wds.
- Glue
- #27-Down's answer is a what?: 2 wds.
- Slightly open
- Ballerina's garb
- Apollo, for one



- 27-Down: 2 wds.
- And others, for short: 2 wds.
- Purchased, in another word
- Sleeping problem
- Sidestep
- Posh parties
- "Oh My Darling, Clementine" part: "... excavating for ___"
- Sarah McLachlan's new release featuring classic Christmas tunes
- Pear variety
- Extract metal from ore
- Woefully
- Vega constellation
- Quittance
- Strong
- Ache a lot
- Conceptualizes
- Joyful
- Projects positivity, perhaps
- Buenos ___ (Capital of Argentina)
- The guitar strings
- Montreal hockey players, to fans
- Bionic Woman's hometown in California
- Candy canes
- time
- Mount ___ (Peak of Crete)
- _of-war
- Greenlight reply

DOWN

- N nn N and N and n
- Bird of myth
- Bestow with a trait
- Comedian Mr. Caesar's
- Office table
- Storage areas
- TV personality
- Ms. Shepherd

- Tequila plant source
- Time to catch the early train during the work week, e.g.: 2 wds.
- "Put a sock ___!"
- Utensil for preparing potatoes
- Soya ___
- Canadian song on

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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***IT'S ALL IN THE STARS** Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Grab every chance to travel, because you need a change of scenery. Likewise, you will love to learn something new if you take a course or study something unusual.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You can make headway clearing up loose details about shared property, inheritances, taxes and debt. Just roll up your sleeves and dig in. Now is the time!

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You can learn a lot about your style of relating to friends, spouses and partners at this time. Observe your style of dealing with those who are closest to you.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You have a lot of stuff, and anything you do to help you feel better organized is a good thing. What can you do today to make your life run more smoothly?

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You want to play and take time off from drudgery, even if it's just catching a game or going out for dinner or seeing a movie. You need some fun!

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Because you will likely earn more money soon, this is a good time to think about how you can make home repairs. You also might be focused on a parent more than usual.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is a busy time for you, because short trips, reading, writing and talking to everyone will keep you on the go. Enjoy this accelerated pace.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
It's important to know what your money scene is. How much do you own? How much do you make? How much do you owe? Information is power.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Make the most of this time with three planets are in your sign. It's easy to attract positive situations now, which means you can come out on top.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You might want to hide for a few days, because you're not ready to step out into the world. When your birthday arrives, things will be different.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Enjoy your popularity with others now. Probably more than any other sign in the zodiac, friendships mean a lot to you.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Because you look so good to bosses and VIPs, use this time to go after what you want. Promote your own agenda. Speak up.



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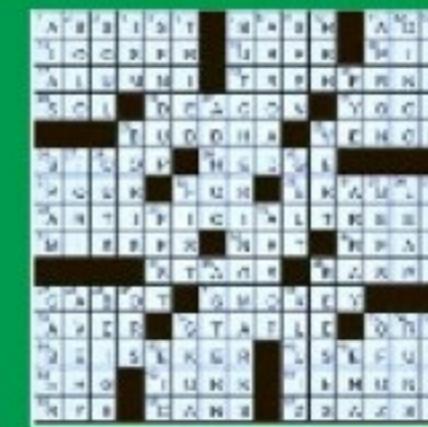
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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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5	7	9	1	8	6	3	2	4
6	4	3	7	2	9	8	1	5
1	8	2	4	3	5	7	6	9
8	2	6	5	1	4	9	7	3
4	5	7	9	6	3	2	8	1
3	9	1	8	7	2	5	4	6
2	1	4	3	9	7	6	5	8
7	3	5	6	4	8	1	9	2
9	6	8	2	5	1	4	3	7



HOLIDAYS ON HYUNDAI EVENT

OFFERS END
DECEMBER 24TH

GET A PREPAID
CREDIT CARD OF UP TO

\$5,000 + 0%

FINANCING FOR
UP TO 36 MONTHS[†]

Amount available on 2016 Sonata Ultimate models

2017 **ELANTRA** L MANUAL

- 5-YEAR WARRANTY^{**}
- HEATED FRONT SEATS
- HEATED POWER SIDE MIRRORS
- REMOTE KEYLESS ENTRY
- PROJECTION HEADLIGHTS



WITH OPTIONAL FRONT CRASH
PREVENTION. APPLIES ONLY TO
SEDANS. APPLIES ONLY TO VEHICLES
BUILT AFTER MARCH 2016.



LEASE FOR ONLY

\$49 0.9% \$0

WEEKLY

AT

FOR 48 MONTHS[†]

WITH

DOWN[§]

WEEKLY



Ultimate model shown ♦

WITH OPTIONAL FRONT CRASH
PREVENTION. APPLIES ONLY TO
SEDANS. APPLIES ONLY TO VEHICLES
BUILT AFTER MARCH 2016.

2017 **TUCSON** 2.0L FWD



Ultimate model shown ♦

- 5-YEAR WARRANTY^{**}
- HEATED FRONT SEATS
- WINDSHIELD WIPER DE-ICER
- VEHICLE STABILITY MANAGEMENT WITH ELECTRONIC STABILITY CONTROL AND TRACTION CONTROL SYSTEM
- REARVIEW CAMERA

FINANCE FOR ONLY
\$76 0.9% \$0

AT

WITH

DOWN



Ultimate model shown ♦

2017 **SANTA FE** SPORT 2.4L FWD

- 5-YEAR WARRANTY^{**}
- HEATED FRONT SEATS
- WINDSHIELD WIPER DE-ICER
- HEATED OUTSIDE MIRRORS WITH TIMER
- 17" ALLOY WHEELS



WHEN EQUIPPED WITH
AUTONOMOUS EMERGENCY
BRAKING. FOR MORE INFORMATION,
VISIT WWW.IIHS.ORG

FINANCE FOR ONLY
\$87 0.9% \$0

AT

WITH

DOWN



5-year/100,000 km Comprehensive Limited Warranty^{††}
5-year/100,000 km Powertrain Warranty

**5 YEAR
WARRANTY**

5-year/100,000 km Emission Warranty
5-year/Unlimited km 24 Hour Roadside Assistance

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